

- ¹ לא: והתניא בערב הפסח תלאוחו לישו הנוצרי והכרזו יום ישו הנוצרי
 יוצא לפניו ארבעים יוצא ליסקל על שכיסוף
- ² והיסית והידיח את ישראל כל מי שיודע לו זכות יבא
 וילמד עליו זכות ולא מצאו לו זכות ותלאוחו בערב פסח אמר עולא
- ³ ותסביר דנוצרי בר הופיע זכות הוא מסית הו ורחמנא אמר: לא תחמור
 ולא חכה עליו שאני ישו הנוצרי ذكرוב למצלות
- ⁴ הווה ת'ר: חמשה תלמידים היו לו לישו הנוצרי,
 מתאי, נקאי נזר ובוני ותודה. אתיוה למתי, אמר לדוז: מתי
- ⁵ יחרג? הכתוב מתי ابو ואראח פני אלhim - אמרו לי: אין, מתי יחרג דכתב מתי ימות ואבד שמוא. אתיוה לנקאי, אמר לדוז: נקאי
- ⁶ יחרג? הכתוב ונקי וצדיק אל תחרג - אמרו לי: אין, נקאי יחרג,
 דכתב בMASTERIM יחרג נקי. אתיוה לנזר, אמר: נזר יחרג? הכתוב ונזר

The tradition investigated in this paper includes most of the first two lines in this image.
 In the translation below, the words in bold are those that this paper will conclude were
 the original core of this tradition, and the ones in gray are those which have been partly
 erased in the Munich manuscript:



Reflections on the “Historicity” of Jesus Christ: A Daring Exploration of the Uncensored Medieval Talmud, the Victorian Insights of Madame Helena Blavatsky, and Plato’s Misconstrued “Republic”, in Three Parts, by Edmund Schilvold (M.Th.)

Included in these reflections is a consideration of the meaning of the “Hebrew”/Judean appellation “Ha-Notzri”/”Ha-Nootzri”.

Front page illustration: Screenshot of Dr. Instone-Brewer’s digitized version of the “deleted” passage in the Talmud where the trial and execution of “Yeshu ha-Notzri” are spoken of, combined with a section of the painting “Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane”, by Heinrich Johann Hofmann.

These essays were originally published by the undersigned as “posts” on Academia.edu, on the occasion of and over the course of the Easter week of 2025 (Sunday, April 13 through Monday, April 21).

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Dedication:

This paper is dedicated to the late **Rev. Sindre Vegard Malmstein Steinkopf** (April 10, 1991–September 16, 2022), a fellow student of philosophy and theology, the most intelligent and talented young man I ever encountered while enrolled at VID Specialized University in Stavanger, Norway, and my dear friend for several years, who committed suicide in the autumn of 2022, only a few months after having reached his goal of becoming an ordained priest.

Mr. Sindre Steinkopf had commenced the strenuous, six years long cand.theol.-program in August 2014, roughly half a year before I began my own theology-studies at VID Stavanger, and he completed his cand.theol.-degree in the summer of 2020. Endowed with an INTJ (“Architect”) mind which was, in several ways, an unusually beautiful and profound one, he could have accomplished a very great deal, if only he had found a way to endure the pain and suffering which comes with feeling all the various facets of existence passionately, understanding more than most, and knowing a little “too much”.

Sindre was a huge fan of Friedrich Nietzsche, who had been one of his foremost heroes for many, many years, and whose distinctive, stylized portrait he would sometimes keep pinned to the wall above his desk, but in spite of this passion for Nietzsche, whom I had never liked very much, he seemed to have a genuine respect for Plato, and a real interest in the person of Christ. The online lectures of the American Platonist Dr. Pierre Grimes, which I introduced him to in 2016, aroused *his* enthusiasm, too, and he once, in 2017 I think, expressed a sincere desire to visit the United States together with the undersigned, and to meet Dr. Grimes in person.

Sindre was also a lover of beauty in all its forms, a love we certainly shared, and I can still vividly recall how this usually calm and restrained man grew completely ecstatic with joy at the sight of a huge, majestic, thundering, white waterfall (located near the village of Ims) – actually a creek falling down from a cliff, which had been magnified many times beyond its usual size by the exceptionally intense waterfalls of the summer of 2017 – and how he adorned the bare apartment that we eventually rented together and lived in as flatmates on the island of Roaldsøy with atmospheric and evocative 19th-century landscape paintings.

Beyond the works of Nietzsche, he was intrigued by the book title “Christ, the Conqueror”, which appealed to his heroic instinct, and in 2018, he gifted me a fine copy of Pascal’s philosophical Pensées, not knowing that I was already an avid reader of Pascal.

Sindre and I also shared an understanding of and a deep insight into the one-sided and propagandistic nature of much of modern history, and into how this world we are in actually works. We had a small handful of truly unforgettable exchanges, such as the one we would later refer to as “the Conversation below the Tower”, i.e. below the old tower overlooking the harbor in Stavanger, and “the Conversation in the Attic”, meaning in the attic in the old villa in Vistegata 17 that I was living in at the time – exchanges which, to our mutual astonishment, revealed the striking extent to which we had long been pursuing virtually the same trajectories of research, and been reading the same thought-provoking books. In some ways Sindre was ahead of me intellectually, and in terms of comprehension, even though he was significantly younger, and in some ways I was ahead of him, as was only natural.

Not all was “cream and peaches”, however, and in 2018, on a day when he was completely exhausted, he exclaimed, in response to my observation that life is sometimes a struggle, that “I do not know why I am struggling” (Norwegian: “Jeg vet ikke hvorfor jeg kjemper”), meaning that he did not see clearly why he should continue the struggle that his somewhat difficult life constituted. Nevertheless, in 2019 he seemed determined to not only finish his degree, but to use his hard-won intellectual insights to benefit his nation and his people, and to one day make a notable contribution to the academic philosophical debate.

That you could not find the deeper or higher meaning that might have enabled you to soldier on, and that you decided to leave this world at the very time when you had once prophesized that the struggle or fight (Norwegian: kampen) would begin in earnest, is unspeakably tragic. With your departure, Sindre, Norway and Europe lost one of its best and most promising young men, and I have been left to advocate alone for the issues we once dreamed of advocating for together.

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Part One: Reflections on the “Historicity” of Jesus Christ (Palm Sunday)

It is probably one of the most important questions a historian of the “West” can ask – due to the implications of whatever the truth of the matter is –, yet one of the most difficult to solve conclusively:

Did the Jesus (Iesous) of the Christian gospels, or someone more or less like him, ever exist as a real, historical, tangible human being, or were both the narratives and the sayings associated with the name of Jesus partly invented out of “whole cloth” and partly appropriated from or inspired by various ancient sources most people of today have little or no real familiarity with, such as the life of Socrates, the life of Apollonius of Tyana, the Eleusinian Mysteries, the Mithraic Mysteries, the myths of Egypt and of Mesopotamia, and so on and so forth?

Could it even be the case, moreover, if the latter option should turn out to be the true one, that the proverbial rabbit hole has yet another level to it, and that the Jesus character and his biographies were deliberately crafted, by a tiny cabal or clique of people, with the intention to tempt the peoples and tribes of Europe and the world to abandon their native, ancient ways and admit an alien deity into their midst, and to thus conquer them theologically and psychologically, and eventually also politically, as some have claimed?

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), that highly unconventional and provocative German thinker, certainly came very close to making that very assertion, back in the late 1800s.

The question of whether Jesus – Jesus Christ – ever actually lived and walked the earth has been asked innumerable times over the last two thousand years, and it has been asked with a new intensity and zeal since the outbreak of the empirically oriented Protestant Revolution, also known as the Reformation, which reacted to corruption and cruelty and wastefulness, and which wanted to return to “the sources”, but which, gradually, tore the entire “Holy Bible” to pieces in its quest for an

“authentic” and “unadulterated” core of primal Christian history and faith, and which very nearly tore Europe and European Civilization to pieces as well, by either giving rise to or aiding the development of (1) the weird and gloomy extremes of Calvinism and (later) of Northern Pietism, (2) the replacement of transcendent and sublime philosophical rationalism and realism with worldly nominalism and empiricism, (3) the transition from rural feudalism and the rule of Monarchs to urbanism and commercialism and the rule of Money, (4) the largely justified but too anti-supernatural textual analysis movement known by the strangely inappropriate label of “Higher Criticism”, (5) the partial or even wholesale rejection of Christian Platonism, the true lifeblood of and the real philosophical justification for and foundation of the Christianity founded by the more intelligent of the saintly Fathers (such as St. Augustine of Hippo), and (6) the creeping theological substitution of Life in this World as a Pilgrimage, aimed at the Kingdom of the Heavens, with very different pilgrimages to a terrestrial and worldly Zion, aimed not at an otherworldly Heaven, but at a carnal “heaven” here on this present, material Earth.

How, after all that, and much more – all the fanaticism, all the zealotry, all the iconoclasm, all the tearing down of old temples, all the rewriting of history, all the false and absurd history, all the dastardly power games, all the dirty politics, all the forced conversions, all the subtle mind games, all the sweeping doomsday scares, all the oscillation between extremes; between theses and anti-theses, all the dreadful disappointments, all the broken promises, all the gruesome wars, all the insufferable arrogance and haughtiness, all the violent intolerance, all the unwarranted dichotomies, all the psychological projection, all the boredom, all the freedom, all the serfdom, all the twists and turns of Christendom – how, I say, after such a gargantuan and bizarre agglomeration of good and bad and all too human happenings, could one not be tempted to ask the following blunt question:

Was it all baloney?

Or did it all begin with a real person, who did something extraordinary (whatever it was), and who sparked such widespread amazement, and such outrage in high places, that history simply could not remain unaffected, and that someone simply had to deal

rather decisively with not only the man himself – if man he was –, but also with his followers and his legacy?

Was he perhaps, eventually, as time went on, and as the ultimate act of defamation and revenge, cleverly portrayed as a advocate for and a representative of the very powers and principalities he so ardently sought to oppose?

Could it be that not only his theology, if he actually had one, but his ancestry, was misrepresented and falsified?

Can the essence of whatever it was he taught and aimed for ever be extricated from all the large and small accretions, and all the later glosses and insertions and rewordings?

Or would it be wiser to just give up the whole quest for the “historical Jesus”, and make a conscious, bold decision to change over to the clarity and cleanliness of ancient, pre-Christian Platonism (which has its roots in Pythagoreanism), or to the contemplative and comparatively peaceful Dharmic Vedism of Northern India?

When seen in a wider perspective, there is little or nothing in his teachings – at least not in those which are known to us, and in the form they have come down to us – which is very original or exceptional or “revolutionary”. They do not constitute Divine Revelation – not in the sense of presenting something entirely new to the whole world. Virtually all the more noteworthy ethical and theological and philosophical precepts attributed to him, including the ones I strongly suspect constituted his most important doctrine and injunction, were anticipated by Socrates and Plato, and may be found scattered about in Platonic dialogues like the Gorgias and the “Republic” (texts which very few people even bother to read from beginning to end nowadays even in translation). This means that these concepts and ideas would have been fairly widely known in the Greco-Roman and Phoenician world, the world of the Mediterranean and beyond, centuries before the supposed nativity of The Savior.

If there is anything truly remarkable about the Christ, whether the Christ of literature and of myth (consult C. S. Lewis for thoughtful considerations of the significance of

the myth) or the possible Christ of history is intended, it lies in his nature, or in his charisma, or in his manner of teaching and presenting (some of the sayings attributed to him are remarkably pithy and witty), or in his acts, or in his life and death, or in all of these. His emphasis on Selfless Love, on Non-Violence, on Reciprocity, on the Inner Life of Man and on the Majesty of his mysterious Father (whom I have come to view as the First Principle, and not as the YHWH of the Old Testament, whose nature is fundamentally irreconcilable with that of the Jesus of the gospels) is strong, but not unique or unprecedented. It is markedly different from the contents of the Old Testament or Tanakh, generally speaking, and it may have been viewed as somewhat extraordinary in the Judea and Galilee of the first century A.D. – and perhaps that was why he allegedly said that he had only been sent to the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel (Matthew 15:24; maybe only some of the members of the nation of Israel were so deluded and stiff-necked that they were in need of a Jesus to shake them up and bring them to their senses) – but it is not very novel or ground-breaking at all if ancient Greece and India and Egypt are taken into consideration.

As I have said before, the Christ of the gospels has long struck me as a sort of “Galilean Socrates”. Not only do Socrates and Christ share the “turn-the-other-cheek”-doctrine (set forth by the former in Plato’s Gorgias) and the concept of a Heavenly Kingdom or Spiritual Realm Within (as opposed to a monarchy in the empirical, material world; the world of the five bodily senses; Plato’s realm of genesis or generation; see his “Republic”) – the ends or finales of their lives both involve a terrible, dark cup (a real one in the case of Socrates, a metaphorical one in the case of Jesus), an audacious betrayal, a cock (before the trial in the case of Jesus, at the point of death in the case of Socrates; both could be an allusion to Asclepius, a god of healing, to Rebirth, and to the Sun), an dubious accusation of blasphemy, and of leading the people (the Athenians in the case of Socrates) astray, a disturbing trial (the outcome of which is decided by “democracy”), horrified disciples (Plato and others in the case of Socrates) and a heartbreakingly sad and tragic death, and a death which is not death in the sense of annihilation, but a prelude to Liberation (individual in the case of Athens, more collective in the case of Calvary).

Parallel Lives, as Plutarch (the priest) called the phenomenon of similar lives, are not unheard of in history, however, so these similarities need not mean that the canonical

Jesus-narratives were inspired by or influenced by Plato's *Apology* and *Phaedo*, of course.

Now I will finally attempt to provide an response, or at least a partial response, to the question with which this little treatise of mine began:

Did the Jesus of the Christian gospels, or someone more or less like him, ever exist as a real, historical, tangible human being?

To my mind, this question can only, if at all, be decided by a careful and disinterested look at the historical evidence, and since centuries of textual criticism have demonstrated beyond the shadow of a doubt that the canonical gospels and the rest of the texts making up the New Testament, to make a very long and complicated story very short, cannot be taken at face value, at least not in their entirety, have been partially altered and manipulated and adulterated, and sometimes even contradict one another, we have to look beyond the New Testament if we want to have any chance of arriving at a relatively reliable conclusion.

(The same is true of the Old Testament, of course.)

But the veracity of some of the early church fathers has also been called into question. So where does that leave us?

One often hears that there is no real evidence for a historical Jesus beyond the conventional Christian texts – which are not viewed as evidence by their critics. This is not actually the case, though, for there is in fact a most prominent non-Christian work containing some exceedingly strong indications that a historical Jesus, in some ways resembling the Jesus familiar to us from the gospels, really existed. The “problem” is that these indications are found in the to most Christians o-so-taboo Jewish Talmud, that they tend to portray Jesus, who is demonstrably sometimes spoken of by way of “code names” in a very unflattering and derogatory way (in the way the Pharisees of the gospels might have portrayed him, one might say), and that they give the lie to the widespread modern claim that Jesus was “a Jew”, or “Jewish”

(in a meaningful, religious sense), and expose the label “Judeo-Christian” for the oxymoron that it is.

The Talmudic tradition singled out by Rev. Dr. David Instone-Brewer (in his fascinating little paper “Jesus of Nazareth’s Trial in Sanhedrin 43a”, which may be downloaded for free from his profile page here on Academia.edu) as one of the earliest and most authentic (possibly going all the way back to the lifetime of Jesus himself) simply reads like this:

“It was taught: **On the Eve of Passover they hung Yeshu the Notzarine.** And the herald went out before him for 40 days [saying]: ‘Yeshu the Notzarine will go out to be stoned **for sorcery** and misleading **and enticing Israel [to idolatry]**. Any who knows [anything] in his defence must come and declare concerning him.’ But no-one came to his defence so they hung him on the Eve of Passover.” (Instone-Brewer, 2011, p. 5)

This passage is only found in a complete form in the one surviving uncensored version of the Babylonian Talmud, the so-called “Munich Talmud”, and the term “Yeshu the Notzarine” is very faint, indicating that someone once attempted to erase it – fortunately without success.

The emphasis in the above quote indicates what Dr. Instone-Brewer believes to be the original core of this rabbinic tradition, while the words in grey represent the words in the original “Hebrew” that have almost been removed, and which are only barely legible.

In my opinion the fact that these mentions of and references to a “Yeshu ha-Notzeri” (“the Notzarine” is an Anglicization of the “Hebrew” term), who is clearly the same person as the one appearing in the gospel narratives, come from a camp more or less hostile to Jesus and to Christianity, make them all the more interesting, since there is no reason to believe that the Jewish authors simply invented these, or composed all of them as a mere polemical response to the Christian scriptures many of them so detested. Such claims are, to put it very politely, “BS”, aimed at discouraging gentile inquiry into what the Talmud actually says of “Yeshu”.

The Talmudic evidence hits both ways, however, since it indicates that the canonical gospel narratives are heavily romanticized versions of the real story.

Here are a few more *direct quotes* from Dr. Instone-Brewer's important essay:

The Munich Talmud is therefore the only uncensored copy of the whole Talmud, though even this is censored in some respects. The name of Jesus and other words are frequently very faint, as though someone has attempted to erase them. In the passage about Jesus' trial, the two occurrences of the name "Yeshu ha-Notzeri" have been partially erased in this way, as well as parts of the following passage about the names of his disciples. However, the original Hebrew is still visible, and it has been reconstructed by close examination of the manuscript. These reconstructions are usefully collected in an appendix by Herford.

The name of Jesus does not always occur in censored passages. Some refer to "Ben Stada" or "Ben Pandira" (or Panthera), but there is good evidence that these are pseudonyms for Jesus in such passages. In b.San.67a both these names are used for the same person who is described as "hung on the Eve of Passover" – the same phrase which is used of Yeshu ha-Notzeri in b.San.43a. Also, Tosephta refers to "Yeshu ben Pandira", and it has a story about a follower of him, Jacob of Kephar Sekhania who met Eliezer b. Hyrcanus (late 1st or early 2nd C) in Sepphoris near Nazareth (t.Hull.2:23). **Tosephta's version of this story says that he taught Eliezer a saying of the minim.** The saying itself is found at b.AZ.17a, where the Munich Talmud attributes it to "Yeshu ha-Notzeri". (Instone-Brewer, 2011, p. 3, emphasis added)

When later Talmudic rabbis debated these names, they concluded that the same person was called both "ben Stada" and "ben Pandira" because one was the name of his mother's husband and the other was her lover, so they concluded that Yeshu was illegitimate. One rabbi thought that "Stada" was the name of his mother, because it is similar to *satat* ("unfaithful"), but others pointed out that her name was actually Miriam – i.e. Mary (b.Shab.104b). Modern scholars have concluded that these multiple names represent more than one individual who have become confused.

The pre-history of these traditions is probably impossible to trace. However, it is unlikely that more than one person was “hung on Passover Eve”, and we have independent sources to confirm that this referred to Jesus. Therefore it is likely that the common factor which caused these individuals to become confused with each other was the charge of sorcery. (Instone-Brewer, 2011, p. 3, emphasis added)

The passage about Jesus’ trial at b.San.43a is unique among them because it appears to contain a tradition which dates back to the time of Jesus. The tradition, as preserved in Talmud, has clearly been edited later, but it is likely that the original words have survived. The common pattern of editing in rabbinic traditions is to expand the text while leaving the original words unaltered. (Instone-Brewer, 2011, p. 4, emphasis added)

The tradition investigated in this paper includes most of the first two lines in this image. In the translation below, the words in bold are those that this paper will conclude were the original core of this tradition, and the ones in grey are those which have been partly erased in the Munich manuscript:

It was taught: **On the Eve of Passover they hung** Yeshu the Notzarine. And the herald went out before him for 40 days [saying]: “Yeshu the Notzarine will go out to be stoned **for sorcery** and misleading **and enticing Israel [to idolatry]**. Any who knows [anything] in his defence must come and declare concerning him.” But no-one came to his defence so they hung him on the Eve of Passover. Other manuscripts which have this tradition contain a few variants. The Florence MS has “on the Eve of Shabbat and Eve of Passover” and only the Munich MS includes “haNotzeri”.
(Instone-Brewer, 2011, p. 5)

The tradition of Jesus’ trial has been partially preserved in four other sources: 1) Another censored passage at b.San.67a includes the words “on the eve of Passover they hung …”, followed by other names used for Jesus, “Ben Stada” and “Ben Pandira”. 2+3)

The words “for sorcery and enticing Israel” occur at Sanhedrin 107b with a parallel at Sotah 47a.4)

Outside the Talmud, two charges are recorded by Justin Martyr, who said that as a result of Jesus' miracles, the Jews "dared to call him a magician and an enticer of the people" (...).

Stanton pointed out that these two charges also occur together in the 3rd century Acts of Thomas, where Thomas is charged with them, though clearly as a proxy for Jesus. They also occur in Josephus' Testamonium but this is widely believed to be a Christian addition of unknown date.

The name in this tradition varies in different sources and manuscripts, "Yeshu", "Yeshu ha-Notzeri", "Ben Stada" or "Ben Pandira". This makes it possible that this tradition originally referred to someone other than Jesus. However, this is very unlikely because of the strange date for the execution (which is strongly linked with Jesus traditions in the Gospels), and because the names "Ben Stada" and "Ben Pandira" are elsewhere linked with each other and with the name of Jesus in phrases such as "Yeshu ben Pandira" (t.Hull.2:23). (Instone-Brewer, 2011, p. 9, emphasis added)

These various sources which contain parts of the tradition about Jesus' trial show that this tradition was widely known and well preserved. The Talmudic sources are difficult to date because although some named rabbis are involved, they are citing older traditions and, as often occurs, the origin of these traditions is not identified. Justin is writing at about AD 150, and he appears to be citing something which is common knowledge because he makes no effort to verify it for his Jewish opponent whom he is addressing.

We therefore have confirmation from three rabbinic sources and one Christian source for the words: "On the eve of Passover they hung Yeshu for sorcery and enticing Israel". The fact that these words form a coherent tradition by themselves makes it possible that this was the historic core from which the rest has resulted by the addition of explanatory comments. The fact that the other words cannot be paralleled elsewhere is not an indication by itself that they originated later than this core tradition, but there are internal criteria which do suggest that this was the case. (Instone-Brewer, 2011, p. 10)

The first problem Jews faced was the date of the trial and execution. The Passover Eve refers to the whole day preceding the Passover meal on the evening of the 14th of Nisan, much like Christmas Eve refers to a whole day. Although this was not officially part of the Passover Festival, it grew in importance when the law about unleavened bread became a household search and clearout of every crumb of leaven. This became a central part of Passover after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, when the sacrifice of a lamb became impossible, but it was already important in Temple times. A timetable was instituted by which leaven had to be found by noon on Passover Eve, and a signal was given at the Temple when this search should end (m.Pes.1.5). The School of Shammai (which effectively disappeared after 70 CE) agreed with the School of Hillel that the whole day should be devoted to searching for leaven so no other work should occur (m.Pes.1.1; 4.5). This meant, in effect, that the whole day of Passover Eve was devoted to sacred tasks and it was certainly not the right time for a trial or an execution.

We have no evidence that this date would be illegal for a trial, but it is certainly not a date which would be chosen by any court interested in observing Jewish customs.
(Instone-Brewer, 2011, p. 12)

The second problem in this core tradition is the suggestion that the execution was by hanging rather than by being stoned, as prescribed by Torah and Mishnah. Torah was very clear that stoning was the punishment for “enticing” (Deut.13.6–10) and it prescribes a death penalty for “sorcery” though the method of execution is not prescribed (Ex.22.18; Deut.18.10). However, in a second-century debate, the rabbis concluded that sorcery was punished by stoning, partly because the sorceress is listed alongside the woman guilty of bestiality which was punishable by stoning (see the debate at b.San.67a). Mishnah makes a tidy list of crimes which are punished by stoning, including “sorcery”, “enticing” and “misleading” (m.San.7.4).

The term “hang” could refer to execution by hanging from the neck, execution by crucifixion, or the hanging of a corpse after another form of execution. Without any reference to another form of execution, the assumption in the first or second century would be that “hang” refers to crucifixion. (Instone-Brewer, 2011, p. 12)

This conclusion would create problems in the second century when Judaism was attempting to follow a uniform rabbinic halakha. They sometimes re-interpreted history to imply that this halakha had been followed by everyone before 70 CE when Judaism was a world of disparate factions. For example, they taught that the Sadducean priests had been forced by the Pharisees to obey this halakha. They would therefore like to believe that executions were carried out in accordance with rabbinic halakha. **However, Jews in the first century had a more realistic understanding of what was possible – the Romans were in charge of capital punishment, and they chose the method of execution.** (Instone-Brewer, 2011, p. 13, emphasis added)

Footnote, page 2:

Paul L. B. Drach, *De l'harmonie entre l'Eglise et la synagogue, ou, Perpétuité et catholicité de la religion chrétienne* (Paris: P. Mellier, 1844), I p. 168, cites an encyclical from Poland in 1631:

“we enjoin you, under the pain of excommunication major, to print nothing in future editions, whether of Mishna or of the Gemara, which relates whether for good or evil to the acts of Jesus the Nazarene, and to substitute instead a circle like this ‘O’, which will warn the Rabbis and schoolmasters to teach the young these passages only viva voce. By means of this precaution the savants amongst the Nazarenes will have no further pretext to attack us on this subject.” (Instone-Brewer, 2011, p. 2, emphasis added)

Explanatory notes:

Minim: “Minim” is a “Hebrew” term in the plural, a term which has the general meaning of “heretics”, and which is sometimes, as in the passage in the Tosefta referred to by Instone-Brewer above, clearly used to refer to early Christians, or to followers of “Yeshu”. Its most controversial and debated use is found in the so-called Birkat ha-Minim, a birkat/birkath or “blessing” which is actually a *curse*, and which

forms a part of the so-called Eighteen Benedictions, a prayer which plays a central part in the everyday life of many religious Jews.

Viva voce: Only “viva voce” means orally only, or exclusively by way of speech.

Comments made on this post at Academia.edu:

Comment made by **Jessica L Scott:**

Interesting read!!! I did not celebrate Pesach this year but I still identify culturally as Jewish. I have read Josephus' works, and found this very fascinating. :-) Great job.

My response to **Jessica L Scott:**

Thank you for that very kind comment, Jessica, and thank you for your open-mindedness and your intellectual curiosity as well. I tried fairly hard to find your new Voynich Manuscript publication on Amazon, by the way, but none of my several searches yielded the desired result, so perhaps you should include a direct link in your next post?

As for Flavius Josephus, I have read his account of the war between parts of Israel and the Romans (which is an exciting, but probably somewhat biased account), but not his “Antiquities of the Jews”, which I have heard contains some *very* interesting remarks.

I didn't go into the topic of the Judean insurrection in this post, but I tend to give some credence to the theory that the canonical Christian gospels, in the form they have come down to us, also make use of themes from the uprising against Roman overlordship in the 60s A.D. In other words, the original story of the life and the acts of “Yeshu ha-Notzeri” or Iesous the Nazarine/Nazarite (?) was either deliberately or accidentally merged with the life and the acts of one or more of the personages associated with the “Jewish Revolt”, which, according to Josephus, I think, ended with the public crucifixion of several of the leaders of that rebellion.

The English independent researcher and author and traveller Ralph Ellis has treated of that subject in great detail, but goes further in his conclusions than the evidence

actually allows for, in my view. He believes that a forgotten kingdom of Edessa, and a prince called Izas Manu played a central role in the war, and that “St. Paul” is really a “pen name” of Josephus, for example.

I wish you an excellent early spring week, however you choose to celebrate it.

Response by **Jessica L Scott:**

“Edmund Schilvold: As always, well-thought out answers! Oh, and yes it hasn't gone live yet.”

Comment made by **Diana A Chelmuş, Universitatea din Bucuresti:**

“And you think Jesus is inocente and he is replacing another person?”

My response to **Diana A Chelmuş:**

My persistent intuition tells me that he was innocent, in much the same way that Socrates was innocent. Both may have been “guilty” of putting lesser deities in their proper place, of “subverting” a religion and a societal order which was in need of reform, and of making a lot of arrogant and self-centred people very angry, and Jesus may perhaps have used whatever it was he became acquainted with in Egypt (c.f. the uncensored Munich Talmud again) to carry out “miracles” or acts of “magic”, such as some of those mentioned in the gospels, but then that was white magic, not black magic, and how could a man professing such lofty and admirable doctrines as Jesus did, if he indeed existed, be truly guilty of any grave evil?

He likely condemned the behavior of YHWH, as set forth in parts of the Old Testament, and the behavior of “the Scribes and the Pharisees”, but he did not blaspheme the Most High God (who, according to the Tanakh itself, gave to the

various peoples of the world their respective deities or angels), nor did he vilify all Israelites.

My reason or dianoia tells me that we simply cannot know for certain what took place, however, since the present evidence and state of scholarship do not allow us to come to a definite conclusion. But then the Platonist puts Nous above Dianoia.

As for replacement, you may perhaps be thinking of the Islamic assertion that it was not Jesus (Isa) who was crucified on the cross, but someone resembling him, and Jesus himself did not die at all, but was taken up into Heaven:

Quote from the Quran:

And [We cursed them] for their disbelief and their saying against Mary a great slander, And [for] their saying, “Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah.” And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain. Rather, Allah raised him to Himself. And ever is Allah Exalted in Might and Wise. And there is none from the People of the Scripture but that he will surely believe in Jesus before his death. And on the Day of Resurrection he will be against them a witness.

Source: <https://legacy.quran.com/4>

Comment made by **Diana A Chelmuş, Universitatea din Bucuresti:**

“Edmund Schilvold: Who invented goodness on the world?”

My response to Diana A Chelmuş:

Dear Diana A Chelmuş, you have a way of asking these curious yet profound questions, somewhat reminiscent of the puzzling responses given by the ancient oracles of Delphi and Dodona to the various inquiries they received ... You know that I am a Platonist, and you have probably read my interpretations of Plato's "Republic" (his *Politeia*), and so, you know what my response would be, as far as theology is concerned.

The Nature of Plato's Good Revealed: Platonic Theology and Its Relation to Christianity and Judaism

https://www.academia.edu/114606884/A_new_and_ground_breaking_analysis_of_the_Socratic_and_Platonic_concept_of_the_Good_or_God_updated

The Hidden Pentiality of Plato's Republic (PhD Project Proposal): Uncovering the Complex Buried Meaning Embedded in Plato's Greatest Dialogue

https://www.academia.edu/128275298/The_Hidden_Pentiality_of_Plato_s_Republic_PhD_Project_Proposal_Uncovering_the_Complex_Buried_Meaning_EMBEDDED_in_Plato_s_Greatest_Dialogue

The Idea of the Good, the Higher, Otherworldly, Truly Heavenly Sun, illuminating the Realm of all the lesser Ideas, the Realm that is the Upper Section of the Realm of the Intelligible or Noetic (c.f. Socrates exposition of the Divided Line in Plato's "Republic"), is an Idea which never began or ceased to be, but *always is*, and this Good is the only perfectly good and fully real Good there is, and *since* this Idea of the Good is the perpetual provider (the literal meaning of "pro-vid" is "prior to vision") of both Truth and Nous, and the ancient Greek term *idea* (originally the Indo-European term "videa") can also mean, and in this case clearly does mean, Beautiful Appearance or Countenance, and that which is genuinely Good is also beautiful and true, and that which is genuinely beautiful is also true and good, since Beauty, as a phenomenon, is a manifestation of Truth of Goodness, and that which is genuinely true is also beautiful and good, this Hidden Sun is not only Good, but also true and beautiful.

Yet even this Idea is not the Ultimate End, not in the sense of being the First Cause, for beyond this Luminous Countenance of the Good is the Good Itself, which is identical to the One Itself, and this One is the Mysterious Father, of whom Socrates so memorably refuses to speak while conversing with Glaukon (c.f. my essay *The Nature of Plato's Good Revealed*), because nothing about it may be described, while its Idea is the Eternally Begotten metaphorical Child or Offspring, which is not begotten by way of procreation, but by way of a continual Overflowing or Emanation, and this combination of an Unknowable First Principle or "Darkness" and the very first Going Forth of that Principle – not "first" in a chronological sense, but in a *hierarchical* sense – was, according to some, at the core of all the more sophisticated ancient theologies, and at the heart of the alleged Secret Doctrine, and it is indeed found not only in Plato, but in Egypt (in the "solar" theology far predating the convulsions of the 1300s B.C.) and in India (Vedism), some four millennia ago, and it was inherited by early Christianity (which did not have the same type of trinitarian theology as was later developed and enforced), and by Esoteric Judaism (the Ein Sof and the Ohr Ein Sof), and I believe this doctrine to be the reason why St. Augustine states that Christ, in the capacity of the Eternal Word, which he views as identical to the Wisdom of God, is a Pure Emanation of Clear Light, and why he also makes the extraordinary claim that Christianity always existed (again, see my paper *The Nature of Plato's Good Revealed*).

But the One is not good in a worldly sense, of course, not is it a one in the way humans tend to conceive of a one. As Proclus, one of the last of the great ancient Platonists, explains in his *On the Theology of Plato* (translated by the English Platonist Thomas Taylor, and finally digitized, about two hundred years later, by the Dutch philosopher Martin Euser): The One is called one by Man because it is the Source of all Oneness and Wholeness on the planes below it, or in the worlds being irradiated by it, and it is styled good by Man because it is the Ultimate End or Goal or Telos for which all Creatures yearn, whether they know it or not, and to which all are destined to return; the Beloved of which all lesser Loves are semblances, and without which none can be made perfect or complete (paraphrase).

You are probably also aware of that striking, startling, unforgettable rebuke uttered by the Christ of the gospels, involving the Good, when a man, or, according to Luke, an

archon or ruler, came asking him what he should do to inherit eternal or (if we attempt a literal translation of the Greek) “age-long” life, a rebuke which I take as being both jocular and deadly serious:

*Why do you call me good? No one is good (*agathos*) but the God (*ho Theos*) alone!*”

This saying, in so perfect accordance with Platonism, is attributed to Christ by both Matthew, Mark and Luke, and the occurrence of a saying in more than one gospel tends to be interpreted by scholars of the Christian Bible as a sign of authenticity.

I hope this was not too much like one of those long and condescending sermons of old, for I am simply trying to summarize and express what I realized and what I saw before my inner eye, in a wonderfully vivid way, when I was working on my master’s thesis (in 2019 and 2020) – and yes, much of what I have said of Platonic theology was anticipated or hinted at by the American Platonist Dr. Pierre Grimes, half a century ago.

There is little innovation in the realm of Platonic philosophy, because Plato is so difficult to surpass; we are all disciples of the White Swan of Greece (c.f. Socrates’ dream, described by Diogenes Laertius, in his *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*), and with that we are, or ought to be, content.

But just as Dr. Grimes put Plato’s True Philosophy in a clearer and more attractive light (to allude to the words attributed by Porphyry to Longinus’, when the latter attempted to sum up what Plotinus had done for Plato) than anyone born in the 20th century whom I am aware of, by returning to antiquity and rejecting modern “nothing-buttery”, I have the humble ambition of rescuing Plato from the clutches of 21st century materialists and reductionists and blockheads and detractors, by incarnating his thought into this present day and age.

Comment made by **Wurx Beaufort**:

RE: "... the creeping theological substitution of Life in this World as a Pilgrimage, aimed at the Kingdom of the Heavens, with very different pilgrimages to a terrestrial and worldly Zion, aimed not at an otherworldly Heaven, but at a carnal "heaven" here on this present Earth.

I am interested in this theme and what others will say here.

RE: "... Or would it be wiser to just give up the whole quest for the 'historical Jesus', and make a conscious, bold decision to change over to clarity and cleanliness of ancient, pre-Christian Platonism (which has its roots in Pythagoreanism), or to the contemplative and comparatively peaceful Dharmic Vedism of Northern India?"

I do NOT want to become too distracted by alleged "proofs" that detract from the wisdom in the 'kingdom is NOW', this IS how it works, and the inclusiveness of the "love" messages. My intuition at this point is that the "love" messages are more clearly defined and central to a "Jesus" method [like Mahayana] than the more vague inferences in Plato, Hindu, Taoist, or Buddhist philosophical traditions.

The wisdom in these "love" messages is more immediate, more tangible, and more based in biology than in intellectual speculation. My bias is that the wisdom of these messages transcends and is not reliant upon a brief visit by an extraterrestrial or metaphysical entity. My bias eschews proofs by authoritarians claiming ownership of a "revelation" to a select few is ultimate and superior the child-mind marvelling at the caterpillar, the butterfly, and how these are related.

PLUS: YOU write in a very balanced and thought-filled style.

Response to **Wurx Beaufort**:

Dear Wurx Beaufort, thank you for your comments and your thoughts. *Regarding your first remark:* If we generalize and simplify a bit, we can distinguish between the

following two kinds of religion and of religio-philosophical systems: (1) The class or category emphasizing and focusing on the Human *Individual*, on the *Inner*, Mental-Psychological Life of the Human Being, on the metaphorical Kingdom or Spiritual Realm *Within*, and Personal, *Individual* Growth and Development and Transformation, and on *Individual* Salvation or Liberation or Union with the Divine, attained to via the metaphorical walking of an Inner, Psychological Path or Road, and (2) the class or category centered around and preoccupied with the Collective, with the *Group*, with Social Classes and Social Issues, with the *Outer*, External, Material World, the World of the Five *Bodily* Senses, and with the world as we now have it, with the transformation of this world into a different and allegedly better one, by way of human and societal effort, as opposed to supernatural, divine intervention, and with the realization of some sort of worldly, earthly kingdom or state in this material world – a Utopia, if you will – the realization of which is also viewed as Salvation or Liberation, and even as Unification with the Divine, but in a communal or tribal sense, not in an individual sense.

While the first type, characterized by the emphasis on the Inner Life, and on Theosis or Union with God via the walking of the Inner Path, and therefore by Introspection and Yoga and Contemplation, *spiritualizes* human existence and the world, and yearns for the otherworldly, and for the Next Life, or the Next Phase of the Life of the Psyche – the Phase when Salvation has been attained to by the non-biological Individual, which is the True Individual – tends to lead to a fairly peaceful and stable society, remaining more or less the same over the course of the centuries, precisely because the focus is on the Individual, and on Individual Improvement, the second type, characterized by the emphasis on the Outer World, and on the improvement or transformation of that material world by way of some sort of large-scale effort or grand project or revolution, and therefore by practical action and collectivism, *materializes* human existence and the world, longs for or lusts for that which is of this world, and for that which belongs to the physical, biological body, and for the power and prosperity and control which the hoped-for future kingdom or Utopia will usher in, and will often snark and scoff at the alleged “dualism” (a term fashionable in academic circles these days), the “meaningless propositions” (c.f. Logical “Positivism”), the “nonsense”, the “romanticism”, the metaphysical claims, the invisible supposed results, the dreamy otherworldliness and the belief in an Afterlife

and in other planes and realms characterizing category one, and might even attempt to subvert and undermine and discredit and ridicule both the people belonging to it and their systems, since those adhering to the second type view the first type as an impediment or obstacle to the forging of the future Utopia, and to the collective projects required to bring that improved world about.

Paradoxically, however, the category two systems are doomed to failure, eventually, not only because they have a naïve and unrealistic view of the nature of this physical, material world – due to the fact that their adherents are infatuated with its excitements and its pleasures – but also because human beings, as C. S. Lewis so rightly observed, need the belief in and the hope of the Immortality of the Soul, the Afterlife and the Divine in order to live the best possible life in and make the most of life in this world, and because this present world is a world of flux, where nothing lasts forever, and is destined for a destruction which no amount of human effort can avert, in the sense of future, astronomical cataclysms involving first the solar system (the death of the physical Sun) and then the entire physical Universe.

The above is only a quick attempt to draw an outline of a situation which could easily be made the topic of a book, or a series of books, and which, in my view (a view based on some twenty years of ever-deepening intellectual inquiries and reflections) is extremely, exceedingly important for grasp, not only for the sake of one's own, individual wellbeing and future Salvation or Liberation, but for the sake of the future of humanity and the world, *for the difference between and the divide between and the conflict between these two categories, one and two, is not only one of the great themes of human history* – where it can be observed in and helps illuminate the demise of the High Civilization of Sumer, the recurring conflicts in ancient Egypt, the intellectual disputes between the philosophical schools of Northern India, the resistance to Hellenization in the Middle East, the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees in the gospels, the conflicts within Roman Catholicism in the medieval era, the Protestant Revolution and the wars between Protestants and Catholics, the Protestant rejection and vilification of the monastic, contemplative life, the ravages perpetrated by the corrupt Oliver Cromwell in Ireland, the Masonic Revolution in France in the late 1700s, and the ensuing wars and massacres, centralization and secularization, the revolutionary upheavals of 1848 in much of mainland Europe, the

Marxist/Communist Revolution in Russia in the autumn of 1917, and the ensuing unprecedented bloodbaths and orgies of sadism and desecration and destruction, the famous rupture between Freud and Jung, leading to vastly different schools of psychology, the old animosity between Germany and Great Britain, the terrible “Great War” and its continuation with the Second World War, the Communist/Maoist destruction of and genocide in Tibet (some six million people killed, most of them civilians, many of them monks), the revolt against Modernity and late modern/”Western” culture in Iran, the Communist outrages in Cambodia and Vietnam, and so on and so forth – *it is also one of the foremost issues of our time, where it manifests in the ominous and disturbing agenda, now openly spoken about, of a New or One World Order*, in this present world, effected not by Divine Intervention, but by Man, or rather by a few self-selected people, which cannot but be totalitarian and technocratic and artificial, and which, considering the nature of those advocating for it and working towards it, is bound to become an instrument of excessive surveillance and terrible oppression, forced homogenization, exploitation and abuse.

And then there is, unfortunately (and it pains me to say this, but it must be said), the behavior of the state and the government of Israel, and of its IDF. In about one and a half years, the leaders and the military of this *allegedly* spiritual and noble and in some way superior nation has perpetrated one of the most heinous crimes against a more or less defenceless civilian and refugee population seen in our part of the world since the vile carpet bombing and “fire-storming” of Dresden and other German cities full of civilians and refugees in 1945.

Some 15,000 children and very young people are estimated to have been killed, either directly or indirectly, by the utter mayhem caused by the IDF, but the number could be even higher, and earlier this year, some 300 such innocent lives were obliterated in just a single week.

The total number of civilian casualties is likely in the hundreds of thousands, and certainly not lower than ca. 200,000.

This is not the behavior of spiritually enlightened people, or of a godly or holy nation in the ordinary sense, and it is certainly not the behaviour of people who have attained to some lofty and noble and difficult inner transformation, and it ought to cause and must cause both all ordinary Christians and Israelites and Muslims of good will to radically reconsider their religions, including the supposed foundations of those religions, and to carry out to complete and lasting break with what I, for lack of a better term, style “Abrahamic fanaticism”, for it is not difficult to see how the darker of the bloody narratives and the radical dichotomies of parts of the Tanakh, as well as its concept of Collective and Transgenerational Guilt, is influencing the conduct of Israel in Gaza, and the tarnishing of the concept of religion which had already resulted from all the outrages perpetrated by supposedly religious people in the past, has now reached a whole new level, and the name of “God” is being abused and blasphemed in an almost unprecedented manner.

One does not right a horrible wrong by committing a far larger one oneself, and one who has overcome him- or herself does not feel, let alone act out in the world, an overpowering lust for retaliation and revenge.

When Christians begin to read and consider what Jesus allegedly said of the fate awaiting those who harm the little children, instead of inscribing vile greetings on bombs bound for Palestine, and when a sweeping change in favor of True Religion, and of the kind of outlook represented by authentic Platonism, and by the Yogis of India, engulfs the whole world like a purifying Deluge, then will the nearly 20,000 children murdered in Gaza alone not have died in vain, but as Martyrs for a worthy cause.

Response to **Adrian C. Grant**, the Scottish historian:

I do think you are expressing yourself somewhat too categorically in your timeline paper, and that these matters are not quite as clear-cut and decided and easy to solve as you seem to infer. As for that secular “Saint Martin” of the imagination of some here on Academia.edu, he has done some good and interesting work, or so it seems, but from the moment I began reading his publications, he struck me as someone who

has an axe to grind, i.e. as someone who is in some ways, and for some reason unbeknownst to me, very angry. In some of his papers, he expresses himself in a manner which reveals that he can barely contain his indignation. As an admirer of the new “anti-laws” instituted by Ee-sous, I should not and will not judge or condemn him, and I may in fact have an axe or two to grind myself, but I can assure you that our metaphorical axes are very different.

Comment made by **Martin Euser, of Utrecht University:**

Well, my comments about Platonism, besides the ones I have made before, can be extended a bit.

What I would like to know about the translation of the word “aeonic”, is whether it is always translated as “eternal”?

In the theosophical interpretation, the word means something like “a long cycle”. As I have said before, Platonism is either too static as regards this “eternal gods” thing, or the word aeonic has been misunderstood.

Either way, “a long cycle” can be very long indeed, like multiple billions or trillions of years. Just saying.

Another point concerns Proclus. I have been studying many texts (including the 2012 editions of Chlup and others) and see many commonalities with Point Loma theosophy. So far, so good. Proclus does go a bit far in inventing ever more orders and steps in the emanational process. Despite this, there always remains a gap between the eternal and the temporal, which he cannot solve.

My suggestion is to widen one’s lens to see the temporal simply as a sequence of events in the infinite duration. Quantified steps.

That’s it for the moment. Keep up the good work!

Response to Martin Euser:

Dear Martin Euser, (and may I say dear fellow admirer of the Lady of the Haunting Gaze?), there is great deal to go into here. A comment is not the best place for it. I have actually spent a fair amount of time researching the etymology and the spectrum of meaning of the ancient Greek term aion (*αιών*, see <https://lsj.gr/wiki/%CE%B1%E1%BC%B0%CF%8E%CE%BD>). As you likely know, various derivations from it are used rather extensively in the canonical gospels, including in some of the more significant of the sayings attributed to Christ himself. One possible meaning is certainly Age, in the technical sense of a long but definite period of time, with virtually the same significance as the Vedic-Sanskrit concept of Yuga, and the various Ages spoken of by Hesiod and by Ovid, the Roman poet, i.e. a metaphysically anchored, objectively real phenomenon – part of the subtle but real Divine Order of the Cosmos.

There are also terms like “Age of Ages” and “Ages of Ages” (see 2 Timothy 4:18 and Revelation 1:6, for example), the former of which is yet another very interesting expression attributed to Christ, if I remember correctly, and this could obviously, when one is aware of the exceedingly complex and sophisticated ancient Indian conception of Time, and of the widespread ancient view of Time as Cyclical, refer to a unit of several ages, such as the Maha-Yuga, which, as you know, consists of four clearly defined periods of time, existing in a certain proportional relationship to one another; one Maha-Yuga consists of 4,320,000 years, while the Kali Yuga or “End-Times-Yuga” lasts for a mere 432,000 years, for example – and, lo and behold, there is that curious Number again; 432, which, according to both our Lady and our Queen of Scots shows up again and again when certain rarely mentioned time spans and codes of the text of the “Hebrew” Bible are unveiled, so to speak, and – wouldn’t you know it – the “Israelites” spent ca. 430 years in that Pit of Depravity which is the Egypt of the fanciful “Hebrew” imagination, before the Avatar of YHWH (Father Seth or Father Chronos?) appeared on the scene, split the Waters impeding the progress of the New Creation in two, and boldly lead the Oppressed Army of his Stormy Lord into a new Olam of Milk and Honey.

But I digress. Aion can also refer to a significant ancient lion-headed deity (I wonder who that could be), to whom the esoteric “Sator Square” probably refers, and Carl Jung chose to name one of his most important treatises just that – Aion.

Considering other languages, the English eve/even/evening and the Norwegian evig (eternal) and aavelig (eternal) might be cognates of the ancient Greek term.

As for the issue of the “gap”, as you call it, between the eternal and the temporal, I think I understand what you are referring to (and we touched on it in the discussion we had a year ago; <https://www.academia.edu/s/253f1c9a86>), but I won’t embark on a defense of Platonism here, but save that for a future paper. However, I would invite you to read and critique what I say of the Platonic and “Augustinian” concepts of Time in my thesis, on p. 46, 55 and 73–74, which are aspects of their thought which are rarely talked about, and then we might discuss the matter further. Perhaps what I say in my thesis will seem rather basic to you, or perhaps you will find it interesting. In any case, I do not think we can understand everything about the Divine Order, let alone have a complete Knowledge of it, in this present life. Happy Easter!

Visions of the Suprarational: A Study of the Concept of Spiritual Sight in the Works of Plato and St. Augustine of Hippo (master's thesis; new version w. minor corrections and some additions)

https://www.academia.edu/122980752/Visions_of_the_Suprarational_A_Study_of_the_Concept_of_Spiritual_Sight_in_the_Works_of_Plato_and_St_Augustine_of_Hippo_masters_thesis_new_version_w_minor_corrections_and_some_additions

Elaboration: “Israelism” or “Judaism” and the Great Simplification of the Ancient Conception of Time

“Israelism” appears to have taken the exceedingly ancient and sophisticated conception of time often referred to by moderns as *cyclical*, and to have sliced away all the loftier levels, so that only a tiny fraction of the original schema, namely *a piece of linear time*, beginning with a divine act of creation and ending with the coming of a messiah, remains.

What the later proponents of this radically diminished conception of time tend to fail to realize, however, is that the minuscule piece of chronological time just referred to comprises but one or a few of the numerous eons or ages in the original system, and that these eons or ages are themselves but the building blocks of larger time structures, of the kind the Vedas call Yugas, and that even these larger eons or Yugas are but components in huge, wheel-shaped formations which commence with a golden age, meaning a universe at the very height of its health and potential, and end with an age of darkness and dissolution, when the universe has devolved into its lowest possible state.

These wheel-like formations recur in endless successions of cycles, separated by an equally endless series of messianic events or divine interventions, i.e. returns of the King, which every time bring the age of darkness to an end and inaugurate a new age of justice and piety.

I have come to strongly suspect that this wonderfully grand view of time, which includes both chronological and cyclical motions, is the un-stated and now forgotten way of thinking underlying the numerous striking and peculiar passages having to do with time in the Christian gospels, often visible only in the original Greek, which speak of eons and eons, and such like.

What has happened, I think, is that the larger picture these passages assume and refer to has been either intentionally shorn away or un-intentionally misunderstood and forgotten, and so that, for example, the original conviction that there has been and will be many coming of the messiah at the end of a cycle, and many new and pristine worlds inaugurated by him, has been lost, and replaced with the belief that there can and will be only one future coming of the messiah and one day of judgment, marking the end of history and the arrival of an final age of indefinite linear duration.

This view would be consistent with the general trend towards simplification and deflation easily observable in much of recorded history.

Moreover, contrary to what some defendants of the purely linear conception of time have asserted, the cyclical one does not necessarily lead to despair and despondency,

as one of the ancient ways of thinking which went together with it consisted in the conviction that salvation does not and cannot come by way of an external event in linear time, affecting the physical world, but that salvation is only achieved when the individual soul or psyche is liberated from its attachments to the world, and achieves communion with the Supreme Deity, in the realm of Eternity, which is a state and a plane beyond all time, whether linear or cyclical.

Hence, there is no need for an external messianic event to achieve salvation and eternal life – all that is required for that is the inner transformation of one's psyche. In this original schema, the external event in the world of matter takes place not to bring about salvation or damnation, but to recreate or rejuvenate the universe, and so that it may continue to exist for another cycle and another set of yugas and eons.



Exploring the potential meanings of Notzri/Notzeri and ha-Notzri/ha/Notzeri by consulting with Madame Helena Blavatsky – a sincere admirer of Christ (Maundy Thursday)

In the first post of this Easter series, we saw that (1) contrary to what some have been claiming, there *do* exist fairly extensive non-Christian traditions referring to a person who is clearly (for a number of reasons I will not go into here) the same as the one whose life and teachings and acts became one of the foundations of the later Christian gospels, and some of the most interesting of these, quite possibly having their roots in the time when Jesus himself lived (whenever that actually was) are only found in a complete form in the single surviving version of the Babylonian Talmud which was not adulterated and censored due to the combination of Christian pressure and Rabbinical Jewish self-censorship and developing secrecy.

This “uncensored” Talmud is now commonly referred to as the “Munich” Talmud, and barely escaped destruction when the Roman Catholic Church desired to burn it out of existence (due to what it says of Jesus and his family), and has been dated to c. 1342 – but the Babylonian Talmud itself (or rather the collection of traditions recorded on its pages) is much, much older than that, having some of its roots in centuries prior to the Christian era.

(What other and even more ancient and even less censored versions of the Talmud there may have once have been, can never be known, of course, unless new witnesses to even older versions should one day be discovered, but considering the tragic fact that so many important Greek and Roman and Phoenician literary works became entirely lost to posterity during the upheavals of late antiquity and the early medieval era, and that the conflict between an increasingly powerful institutionalized Christianity and Talmudic and Rabbinical Judaism predates the Munich Talmud by about one thousand years, it seems perfectly possible that even the “Munich” Talmud may not be the complete and authentic Talmud of, say, the 500s A.D.).

We also saw, moreover, (2) that one of the traditions involving the person known to Christians as Jesus or Iesous, but whom the uncensored Talmud sometimes styles “Yeshu”, or “Y(e)shoo ha-Nootz(e)ri” (usually transliterated as “Yeshu ha-Notzeri”; note that “Yeshu” is probably not his real name, but an acronym referring to a curse, which we will not repeat here, and which is one of the reasons why Christians should avoid calling Jesus “Yeshu(a)”), and sometimes speaks of by way of various “code names” or “pseudonyms” (based on whom the authors of the traditions

thought his parents were, or on which characters in the Tanakh he was thought to resemble, for example), **actually mentions his trial and execution.**

(For more on what Jesus is called in the Talmud, and what the Talmud says of him and his life and ancestry, I would refer the reader to the very insightful little study written by Bernard Pick – a Doctor of Divinity (!) – called *Jesus in the Talmud*, and published in 1913 by the Open Court Publishing Company.)

In addition to all that, we also saw (3) that Jesus, or whatever his real name was, may well have been crucified (!), since the core, i.e. the oldest and most authentic part of the Talmudic tradition analyzed by Dr. David Instone-Brewer (who, unlike many others, including myself, was a Cambridge scholar) in the 2011 paper referred to earlier, “Jesus of Nazareth’s Trial in Sanhedrin 43a”, simply states that

“On the Eve of Passover they hung Yeshu the Notzarine [or the Notzeri] for sorcery, and [for] enticing Israel.”

Furthermore, as Dr. Instone-Brewer points out,

“The term ‘hang’ could refer to execution by hanging from the neck, execution by crucifixion, or the hanging of a corpse after another form of execution. Without any reference to another form of execution, the assumption in the first or second century would be that ‘hang’ refers to crucifixion. We see this when R. Meir expounds Deuteronomy 21.23 about hanging as an indication of God’s curse, by telling a parable about crucifixion. So someone reading the core tradition without any mention of stoning would conclude that Jesus was executed by crucifixion.

This conclusion would create problems in the second century when Judaism was attempting to follow a uniform rabbinic halakha. They sometimes re-interpreted history to imply that this halakha had been followed by everyone before 70 CE, when Judaism was a world of disparate factions. For example, they taught that the Sadducean priests had been forced by the Pharisees to obey this halakha. They would therefore like to believe that executions were carried out in accordance with rabbinic halakha. However, Jews in the first century had a more realistic understanding of

what was possible – **the Romans were in charge of capital punishment, and they chose the method of execution.** (Instone-Brewer, 2011, p. 13, emphasis added)

The usual Roman punishment for rebels who were not Roman citizens was, moreover, indeed the terrible crucifixion on a cross. The perhaps equally terrible execution method of stoning had been outlawed by the Romans, though.

Whether a wooden cross could be viewed as a “pole” (stauros in ancient Greek, staur in archaic Norwegian), or, metaphorically, as a tree (or even the world tree of several ancient mythologies, which symbolizes the revered cosmic axis), will not be discussed here.

Now we come to the huge question raised by the confirmation that “ha-Nootz(e/a)ri” was one of the ancient and original appellations applied to Jesus – the one most of us are familiar with in the mistranslated form of “of Nazareth” – *a question so far raised only by myself this Easter*, strangely enough:

What in the world does the term Nootz(e/a)ri refer to and mean?

Well, this question, and several related to it, were actually answered, insofar as it was possible to answer them at the time, some 150 years ago, by a person I have come to admire very much (quite possibly one of the most intelligent and intuitive women of all time) – a lady who was herself an admirer of Christ (albeit not a “believer”), and whose collected works reveal that she was not at all like what some detractors have made her out to be, and I will now quote a large portion of her answer verbatim (for the sake of context and completeness, I commence the quote a few sentences before the main unveiling begins; will your attention span allow you to digest it, dear reader, and will you be able to handle truth?):

Quotes:

Otfried Müller shows how much the Orphic Mysteries differed from the popular rites of Bacchus, although the Orphikoi are known to have followed the worship of Bacchus. The system of the purest morality and of a severe asceticism promulgated in

the teachings of Orpheus, and so strictly adhered to by his votaries, are incompatible with the lasciviousness and gross immorality of the popular rites.

The fable of Aristaeus pursuing Eurydike into the woods where a serpent occasions her death, is a very plain allegory, which was in part explained at the earliest times. Aristaeus is brutal power, pursuing Eurydike, the esoteric doctrine, into the woods where the serpent (emblem of every sun-god (...)) kills her; i.e., forces truth to become still more esoteric, and seek shelter in the Underworld, which is not the hell of our theologians.

Moreover, the fate of Orpheus, torn to pieces by the Bacchantes, is another allegory to show that the gross and popular rites are always more welcome than divine but simple truth, and proves the great difference that must have existed between the esoteric and the popular worship.

As the poems of both Orpheus and Musaeus were said to have been lost since the earliest ages, so that neither Plato nor Aristotle recognized anything authentic in the poems extant in their time, it is difficult to say with precision what constituted their peculiar rites. Still we have the oral tradition, and every inference to draw therefrom; and this tradition points to Orpheus as having brought his doctrines from India. As one whose religion was that of the oldest Magians – hence, that to which belonged the initiates of all countries, beginning with Moses, the “sons of the Prophets,” and the **ascetic nazars** (who must not be confounded with those against whom thundered Hosea and other prophets) to the Essenes.

This latter sect were Pythagoreans before they rather degenerated than became perfected in their system by the Buddhist missionaries, whom Pliny tells us established themselves on the shores of the Dead Sea, ages before his time, “per saeculorum millia.”

But if, on the one hand, these Buddhist monks were the first to establish monastic communities and inculcate the strict observance of dogmatic conventional rule, on the other they were also the first to enforce and popularize those stern virtues so exemplified by Sakyamuni, and which were previously exercised only in isolated

cases of well-known philosophers and their followers; virtues preached two or three centuries later by Jesus, practiced by a few Christian ascetics, and gradually abandoned, and even entirely forgotten by the Christian Church.

The initiated nazars had ever held to this rule, which had to be followed before them by the adepts of every age; and the disciples of John were but a dissenting branch of the Essenes.

Therefore, we cannot well confound them with all the nazars spoken of in the Old Testament, and who are accused by Hosea with having separated or consecrated themselves to Bosheth; which implied the greatest possible abomination.

To infer, as some critics and theologians do, that it means to separate one's self to chastity or continence, is either to advisedly pervert the true meaning, or to be totally ignorant of the Hebrew language. The eleventh verse of the first chapter of Micah half explains the word in its veiled translation: "Pass ye away, thou inhabitant of Saphir, etc.," and in the original text the word is Bosheth. Certainly neither Baal, nor Iahoh Kadosh, with his Kadeshim, was a god of ascetic virtue, albeit the Septuaginta terms them, as well as the galli – the perfected priests – τετελεσμενούς, the initiated and the consecrated.

The great Sod of the Kadeshim, translated in Psalm lxxxix. 7, by "assembly of the saints," was anything but a mystery of the "sanctified" in the sense given to the latter word by Webster. **The Nazireate sect existed long before the laws of Moses, and originated among people most inimical to the "chosen" ones of Israel, viz., the people of Galilee, the ancient olla-podrida [“stew” or “melting pot”] of idolatrous nations, where was built Nazara, the present Nazareth.**

It is in Nazara that the ancient Nazoria or Nazireates held their "Mysteries of Life" or "assemblies," as the word now stands in the translation, which were but the secret mysteries of initiation, utterly distinct in their practical form from the popular Mysteries which were held at Byblus in honor of Adonis.

While the true initiates of the ostracised Galilee were worshipping the true God and enjoying transcendent visions, what were the “chosen” ones about?

Ezekiel tells it to us (chap. viii) when, in describing what he saw, he says that the form of a hand took him by a lock of his head and transported him from Chaldea unto Jerusalem. “And there stood seventy men of the senators of the house of Israel. . . . ‘Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients . . . do in the dark?’” inquires the “Lord.” “At the door of the house of the Lord . . . behold there sat women weeping for Tammuz” (Adonis). We really cannot suppose that the Pagans have ever surpassed the “chosen” people in certain shameful abominations of which their own prophets accuse them so profusely. To admit this truth, one hardly needs even to be a Hebrew scholar; let him read the Bible in English and meditate over the language of the “holy” prophets.

This accounts for the hatred of the later Nazarenes for the orthodox Jews – followers of the exoteric Mosaic Law – who are ever taunted by this sect with being the worshippers of Iurbo-Adunai, or Lord Bacchus.

[**Explanatory note:** “Iurbo Adunai”: A Gnostic term, or the compound name for Iao Jehovah, whom the Ophites regarded as an emanation of their Ilda-Baoth, the Son of Sophia Achamoth – the proud, ambitious and jealous god, and impure Spirit, whom many of the Gnostic sects regarded as the god of Moses. “Iurbo is called by the Abortions (the Jews) Adunai” says the *Codex Nazaræus* (vol. iii., p. 13). The “Abortions” and *Abortives* was the nickname given to the Jews by their opponents, the Gnostics (TG). Source: Teopedia]

Passing under the disguise of Adoni-Iachoh (original text, Isaiah lxi. 1), Iahoh and Lord Sabaoth, the Baal-Adonis, or Bacchus, worshipped in the groves and public sods or Mysteries, under the polishing hand of Ezra becomes finally the later-vowelled Adonai of the Massorah – the One and Supreme God of the Christians!

“Thou shalt not worship the Sun who is named Adunai,” says the Codex of the Nazarenes; “whose name is also Kadush and El-El. This Adunai will elect to himself a nation and congregate in crowds (his worship will be exoteric) . . .

Jerusalem will become the refuge and city of the Abortive, who shall perfect themselves (circumcise) with a sword . . . and shall adore Adunai."

The oldest Nazarenes, who were the descendants of the Scripture nazars, and whose last prominent leader was John the Baptist, although never very orthodox in the sight of the scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem were, nevertheless, respected and left unmolested. Even Herod "feared the multitude" because they regarded John as a prophet (Matthew xiv. 5). But the followers of Jesus evidently adhered to a sect which became a still more exasperating thorn in their side.

It appeared as a heresy within another heresy; for while the nazars of the olden times, the "Sons of the Prophets," were Chaldean kabalists, the adepts of the new dissenting sect showed themselves reformers and innovators from the first.

The great similitude traced by some critics between the rites and observances of the earliest Christians and those of the Essenes may be accounted for without the slightest difficulty. The Essenes, as we remarked just now, were the converts of Buddhist missionaries who had overrun Egypt, Greece, and even Judea at one time, since the reign of Asoka the zealous propagandist; and while it is evidently to the Essenes that belongs the honor of having had the Nazarene reformer, Jesus, as a pupil, still the latter is found disagreeing with his early teachers on several questions of formal observance. He cannot strictly be called an Essene, for reasons which we will indicate further on, neither was he a nazar, or Nazaria of the older sect.

What Jesus was, may be found in the Codex Nazaraeus, in the unjust accusations of the Bardesanian Gnostics. "Jesu is Nebu, the false Messiah, the destroyer of the old orthodox religion," says the Codex. He is the founder of the sect of the new nazars, and, as the words clearly imply, a follower of the Buddhist doctrine. In Hebrew the word naba means to speak of inspiration; and nebo is, a god of wisdom. But Nebo is also Mercury, and Mercury is Buddha in the Hindu monogram of planets. Moreover, we find the Talmudists holding that Jesus was inspired by the genius of Mercury. The Nazarene reformer had undoubtedly belonged to one of these sects; though, perhaps, it would be next to impossible to decide absolutely which.

But what is self-evident is that he preached the philosophy of Buddha-Sakyamuni. Denounced by the later prophets, cursed by the Sanhedrim, the nazars – they were confounded with others of that name “who separated themselves unto that shame,” they were secretly, if not openly persecuted by the orthodox synagogue.

It becomes clear why Jesus was treated with such contempt from the first, and deprecatingly called “the Galilean.”

Nathaniel inquires – “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” (John i. 46) at the very beginning of his career; and merely because he knows him to be a nazar. Does not this clearly hint, that even the older nazars were not really Hebrew religionists, but rather a class of Chaldean theurgists?

Besides, as the New Testament is noted for its mistranslations and transparent falsifications of texts, we may justly suspect that the word Nazareth was substituted for that of nasaria, or nozari.

That it originally read “Can any good thing come from a nozari, or Nazarene”; a follower of St. John the Baptist, with whom we see him associating from his first appearance on the stage of action, after having been lost sight of for a period of nearly twenty years.

The blunders of the Old Testament are as nothing to those of the gospels. Nothing shows better than these self-evident contradictions the system of pious fraud upon which the super-structure of the Messiah-ship rests. “This is Elias which was for to come,” says Matthew of John the Baptist, thus forcing an ancient kabalistic tradition into the frame of evidence (xi. 14). But when addressing the Baptist himself, they ask him (John i. 21), “Art thou Elias?” “And he saith I am not”!

Which knew best – John or his biographer?

And which is divine revelation? The motive of Jesus was evidently like that of Gautama-Buddha, to benefit humanity at large by producing a religious reform which

should give it a religion of pure ethics; the true knowledge of God and nature having remained until then solely in the hands of the esoteric sects, and their adepts.

As Jesus used oil and the Essenes never used aught but pure water, he cannot be called a strict Essene. On the other hand, the Essenes were also “set apart”; they were healers (*assaya*) and dwelt in the desert as all ascetics did. But although he did not abstain from wine he could have remained a Nazarene all the same. For in chapter vi. of Numbers, we see that after the priest has waved a part of the hair of a Nazorite for a wave-offering before the Lord, “after that a Nazarene may drink wine” (v. 20).

The bitter denunciation by the reformer of the people who would be satisfied with nothing is worded in the following exclamation: “John came neither eating nor drinking and they say: ‘He hath a devil.’ . . . The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say: ‘Behold a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber.’”

And yet he was an Essene and Nazarene, for we not only find him sending a message to Herod, to say that he was one of those who cast out demons, and who performed cures, but actually calling himself a prophet and declaring himself equal to the other prophets.

The author of Sod shows Matthew trying to connect the appellation of Nazarene with a prophecy, and inquires “Why then does Matthew state that the prophet said he should be called Nazaria?” Simply “because he belonged to that sect, and a prophecy would confirm his claims to the Messiah-ship. . . . Now it does not appear that the prophets anywhere state that the Messiah will be called a Nazarene.” The fact alone that Matthew tries in the last verse of chapter ii. to strengthen his claim that Jesus dwelt in Nazareth merely to fulfil a prophecy, does more than weaken the argument, it upsets it entirely; for the first two chapters have sufficiently been proved later forgeries.

Baptism is one of the oldest rites and was practiced by all the nations in their Mysteries, as sacred ablutions. Dunlap seems to derive the name of the nazars from *nazah*, sprinkling; Bahak-Zivo is the genius who called the world into existence out of

the “dark water,” say the Nazarenes; and Richardson's Persian, Arabic, and English Lexicon asserts that the word Bahak means “raining.”

But the Bahak-Zivo of the Nazarenes cannot be traced so easily to Bacchus, who “was the rain-god,” for the nazars were the greatest opponents of Bacchus-worship.

[**Explanatory note:** Bahak-Zivo: “We find an echo of this in the *Codex Nazaræus*. Bahak-Zivo, the ‘father of Genii’ (the seven) is ordered to construct creatures. But, as he is ‘ignorant of Orcus’ and unacquainted with ‘the consuming fire which is wanting in light,’ he fails to do so and calls in Fetahil, a still purer spirit, to his aid, who fails still worse and sits in the mud (Ilus, Chaos, Matter) and wonders why the living fire is so changed. It is only when the ‘Spirit’ (Soul) steps on the stage of creation (the feminine Anima Mundi of the Nazarenes and Gnostics) and awakens Karabtanos—the spirit of matter and concupiscence—who consents to help his mother, that the ‘Spiritus’ conceives and bring forth ‘Seven Figures,’ and again ‘Seven’ and once more ‘Seven’ (the Seven Virtues, Seven Sins and Seven Worlds). Then Fetahil dips his hand in the Chaos and creates our planet.” (Footnote)]

“Bacchus is brought up by the Hyades, the rain-nymphs,” says Preller; who shows, furthermore, that at the conclusion of the religious Mysteries, the priests baptized (washed) their monuments and anointed them with oil.

All this is but a very indirect proof. The Jordan baptism need not be shown a substitution for the exoteric Bacchic rites and the libations in honor of Adonis or Adoni – whom the Nazarenes abhorred – in order to prove it to have been a sect sprung from the “Mysteries” of the “Secret Doctrine”; and their rites can by no means be confounded with those of the Pagan populace, who had simply fallen into the idolatrous and unreasoning faith of all plebeian multitudes.

John was the prophet of these Nazarenes, and in Galilee he was termed “the Saviour,” but he was not the founder of that sect which derived its tradition from the remotest Chaldeo-Akkadian theurgy.

“The early plebeian Israelites were Canaanites and Phoenicians, with the same worship of the Phallic gods – Bacchus, Baal or Adon, Iacchos – Iao or Jehovah”; but even among them there had always been a class of initiated adepts.

Later, the character of this plebe was modified by Assyrian conquests; and, finally, the Persian colonizations superimposed the Pharisean and Eastern ideas and usages, from which the Old Testament and the Mosaic institutes were derived.

The Asmonean priest-kings promulgated the canon of the Old Testament in contradistinction to the Apocrypha or Secret Books of the Alexandrian Jews – kabalists. Till John Hyrcanus they were Asideans (Chasidim) and Pharisees (Parsees), but then they became Sadducees or Zadokites – asserters of sacerdotal rule as contradistinguished from rabbinical. The Pharisees were lenient and intellectual, the Sadducees, bigoted and cruel.

(...)

Verily the disciples who wrote the *Codex Nazaraeus* were right. Only it is not Jesus himself, but those who came after him, and who concocted the Bible to suit themselves, that “perverted John’s doctrine, changed the baptism of the Jordan, and perverted the sayings of justice.” It is useless to object that the present Codex was written centuries after the direct apostles of John preached. So were our Gospels. When this astounding interview of Paul with the “Baptists” took place, Bardesanes had not yet appeared among them, and the sect was not considered a “heresy.”

(...)

But we may offer another question: If baptism is the sign of regeneration, and an ordinance instituted by Jesus, why do not Christians now baptize as Jesus is here represented as doing, “with the Holy Ghost and with fire,” instead of following the custom of the Nazarenes?

In making these palpable interpolations, what possible motive could Irenaeus have had except to cause people to believe that the appellation of Nazarene, which Jesus bore, came only from his father's residence at Nazareth, and not from his affiliation with the sect of Nazaria, the healers?

To assure ourselves that Jesus was a true Nazarene – albeit with ideas of a new reform – we must not search for the proof in the translated Gospels, but in such original versions as are accessible. Tischendorf, in his translation from the Greek of Luke iv. 34, has it “Iesou Nazarene”; and in the Syriac it reads “Iasoua, thou Nazaria.”

Thus, if we take in account all that is puzzling and incomprehensible in the four Gospels, revised and corrected as they now stand, we shall easily see for ourselves that the true, original Christianity, such as was preached by Jesus, is to be found only in the so-called Syrian heresies. Only from them can we extract any clear notions about what was primitive Christianity.

Such was the faith of Paul, when Tertullus the orator accused the apostle before the governor Felix. What he complained of was that they had found “that man a mover of sedition . . . a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes”; and, while Paul denies every other accusation, he confesses that “after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers.”

This confession is a whole revelation. It shows: 1, that Paul admitted belonging to the sect of the Nazarenes; 2, that he worshipped the God of his fathers, not the trinitarian Christian God, of whom he knows nothing, and who was not invented until after his death; and, 3, that this unlucky confession satisfactorily explains why the treatise, Acts of the Apostles, together with John's Revelation, which at one period was utterly rejected, were kept out of the canon of the New Testament for such a length of time.

End of quote. Have you guessed who the extremely knowledgeable author is?

I do not necessarily endorse all which is said here, by the way, but I would estimate that about seventy or eighty percent of it is fairly accurate.

(Blavatsky, 2019, pp. 1074–1085, emphasis added)

Blavatsky, Helena. (2019). *The Secrets of Spirituality & Occult* [Kindle Edition].
Musaicum Books

<https://blavatsky.net/elementals/>

Comments made on this post at Academia.edu:

Response to Jessica L. Scott:

Yes indeed, Jessica L Scott (:-)), and the Madame is in fact well worth reading and listening to, as you probably know already.

A few years ago, I was extremely sceptical to her, believing as I then still did, to some extent, in hearsay, and in the sort of slanderous and unsubstantiated claims floating around on the Internet (including on parts of Wikipedia), but once I started delving into her collected works, I realized fairly quickly, due to my prior familiarity with some of the topics she discusses (such as Platonic philosophy and ancient history and church history), that she was actually extremely knowledgeable (I cannot even fathom how she managed to read as much as she evidently did – she must have had some sort of almost paranormal hyperlexia), amazingly perceptive, stunningly open-minded, most candid, eloquent even by Victorian standards, usually nuanced and balanced in her analyses of the vicissitudes of human history, and of the various currents of thought (albeit a little too critical of the institutionalized churches, in my view), and very brave.

Several of the conclusions I had reached *entirely on my own*, after years of private research, I found that she had reached and expressed 150 years before me, and many of the issues she was hoping would be dealt with before the end of the 1800s, have

still not been dealt with, due to widespread timidity and narrow-mindedness and arrogance.

I read her with a critical and questioning eye, of course. Some of her truly extraordinary claims seem rather poorly substantiated, some of what she says of modern science and modern scientific findings is, unsurprisingly, outdated, and parts of her writings are rather disorganized, and in need of better editing.

But, having read the 5724 Kindle pages her digitized collected works, which I downloaded from Amazon.com, consist of, I can only say:

Wow! I wish I could have met her in real life. She must have had an IQ of at least 150, and one of the very rare personality types.

Response to Newton After Blake:

Dear Newton After Blake, as you have just demonstrated and shown me in your two comments, we are, unfortunately, in almost total disagreement when it comes to the character of Madame Helena Blavatsky and the nature of her vast work. Albeit I am not nearly as knowledgeable and pioneering as she manifestly was, I can assure you that I know more than enough of *some* of the subjects she discusses to be able to verify that she, at least as far as *those* are concerned, *is speaking the truth*, and making some *very, very* insightful observations.

I also know more enough about history to be able confirm that a number of the observations she makes when it comes to both ancient and modern history are well-founded and worth considering, although they might certainly be made the subject of civil and intellectual debates.

I will not go into details here, since it would require a great deal of time, and since I am not sure that you would actually appreciate it, but I might make some of that which I am thinking of the topics of future papers and posts.

Do you really not think you should at least consider accepting the sincere and well-founded testimonials of a person (the undersigned) who not only devoted more than five years of his life to a formal, full-time academic study of theology, philosophy and history, and who has also, as I have said before, been on a spiritual quest and a quest for greater understanding and greater knowledge for many, many years, and who was, at one point in time, back in 2010, a regionally famous and widely recognized self-employed journalist, photographer and graphic designer, instead of relying, as you yourself admit that you do, on a few YouTube-videos for your final verdict?

Everyone can make, and inevitably makes, some mistakes over the course of his or her life, and I have certainly made some serious mistakes in the past myself, but becoming acquainted with Blavatsky is not one of them – of that I am sure. My admiration for her has been years in the making, as it were, and I stand by what I said.

Furthermore, you do not and have not really interacted intellectually and academically with any of the contents of these two Easter posts of mine, let alone with the actual contents of Dr. David Instone-Brewer's important study and the numerous fascinating observations made by Madame Blavatsky in the chapters I have quoted from. That is not academic behavior, nor the behavior of someone who is genuinely interested in understanding and in knowledge, and in ascertaining the truth, whatever that truth might be.

Moreover, since you brought up the topics of *credibility* and *trustworthiness*, I will say that I find the endorsement or near-endorsement of you and a number of other people here on Academia.edu (none of which seem to have so much as a master's degree in any of the *relevant* subjects, nor any peer-reviewed and published papers) for that “Saint Martin”, who may well have done some good analytical work, but who can barely control his anger, clearly has an axe to grind (c.f. what he says in the papers uploaded to his profile), vehemently denies even the *possibility* of a real, historical Jesus-figure of some kind, and refuses to discuss related topics like the contents of the Talmud and the nature and truthfulness of the Old Testament, *rather strange and even suspicious*. (I read several of the Nag Hammadi texts some 15 years ago!)

This situation is made all the more concerning by the fact that many of the profiles involved are not even equipped with a real name, or with a picture of the person behind them.

Knowing how complex topics like the historicity of Jesus, the origins of “Judaism” and the nature of ancient Gnosticism are, I have been baffled by this for some time, but I have not said anything.

In addition to all that, you seem to treat our little Bar (of) Neutrogena with much friendliness and leniency, even though he has been acting a weird and disrespectful way towards some people here (a behavior which worsened considerably when I criticized his silly profile name, and pointed out that such user names makes the whole community look silly), and, in a discussion about a year ago, indicated that he thinks the fate of Jesus Christ in the Afterlife is precisely the one certain passages in the uncensored Talmud could be construed as claiming that he is suffering. You must know what I am talking about.

On top of it all, you are regularly participating the that questionable Turin Shroud discussion, where that “Morello” is publishing her dubious and sometimes obviously spurious twaddle, while promoting the agenda of turning the traditional Jesus Christ of Christianity into a “Jewish” “Yeshu(a)” (without even mentioning the fact that “Yeshu” has been used as an acronym, referring to a “Hebrew” curse). I am not talking about the Turin Shroud itself now, which I think is a real mystery, worthy of further investigation, but of all the pseudo-intellectual rants which she uses that Shroud as a pretext for promoting.

Yet when I attempt to argue *for* a historical Jesus (even though that Jesus may not be the Jesus of the Church dogmas of late antiquity and of the medieval era), and to show the world that there are in fact non-Christian (Rabbinical-Pharisaical) and very old traditions corroborating elements of the New Testament narratives, and to explore the meaning of one of the most important appellations applied to him and his Movement in both Christian and Rabbinical Jewish sources, you are evidently extremely “triggered”, and express yourself in a way which shows that you are almost “freaking out”.

What is going on here? Is this how you heed your Savior's *new* commandments to shun all anger, to purify your heart and to love your enemies?

I have valued you as a mystic and a Christian, but these outbursts make me put a large question mark over your profile name. If you want to be one of my subscribers in the future, then I urge you to calm down, and to start interacting in a meaningful way with my work, which you have not done in several months.

Finally, if you really love Jesus, then you will want to know who he really was, and what he really taught.

Happy Easter!

As for Jessica L Scott, I sincerely hope she was not too disturbed by all this, and Wurx Beaufort and others, who seem to be Seekers of the Truth, have hopefully realized that the Truth is controversial beyond most people's wildest dreams, and that there can be no getting to It without controversy and the taking of risks, and, perhaps, a crucifixion.

Some of the results yielded by searches in Google and DuckDuckGo for the terms “notzri”, “notzrim” and “Nazarene”:

Thread: “Rav ha Meiri’s interpretation of the term “notzrim” in Talmud Bavli-Avodah Zarah 6a and 7b”

<https://judaism.stackexchange.com/questions/124210/rav-ha-meiris-interpretation-of-the-term-notzrim-in-talmud-bavli-avodah-zarah>

Rav ha Meiri's interpretation of the term "notzrim" in Talmud Bavli-Avodah Zarah 6a and 7b

According to the legal determination established in Talmud Bavli -Avodah Zarah 6a and 7b, the halachic status of christians (“notzrim”) appears to be that of idolaters:

[Avodah Zara 6a](#)

[Avodah Zarah 7b](#)

However, I have read that Rav Menachem ha Meiri disputes the fact that in the aforementioned passages the term "notzrim" is referable to christians:

“Regarding what they said in the Gemara, "It is always prohibited to engage in business with notzrim," I interpret it as referring to the notzrim coming from distant lands, as this term is used in Jeremiah (4:16) who called that people notzrim in the name of Nebuchadnezzar; it is well known that in Babylon there was a statue dedicated to the sun, and all the people of Nebuchadnezzar worshipped it ;and you should already have known that the sun's term of service [in astrological concepts] is on Sunday. Therefore, they called this day notzri, because it was the day celebrated by Nebuchadnezzar because the Sun presided over it; this is reasonable and clear".

(Beit ha-Bechirah on Avodah Zarah 2a)

Unless I'm mistaken, in the rabbinic literature the term "notzrim" always means "christians", from "Yeshu ha Notzri" (Jesus the Nazarene).

I would therefore like to know:

- Whether the term "notzrim" used in Jeremiah 4:16 is entirely identical, on the linguistic level, to what we find in the aforementioned Talmudic passages;
- Whether this interpretation of Rav ha Meiri is also endorsed by other masters of the Jewish tradition.

Asked Jul 15, 2021 at 11:55, by Amos74

See Christians, Noṣerim, and Nebuchadnezzar's Daughter Lawrence Zalcman, The Jewish Quarterly Review, New Series, Vol. 81, No. 3/4 (Jan. - Apr., 1991), pp. 411-426 who identifies the Meiri's group as the Mandaeans.

– Double AA, Jul 15, 2021 at 12:21

Great question! Looking forward to the answers

– Aaron, Jul 15, 2021 at 17:09

Meiri's argument echoes that of R. Yehiel of Paris in the disputation preceding the burning of the Talmud in 1242, where R. Yehiel argued that the Talmudic laws against gentiles applied only to the seven biblical nations of yore, but not to the gentiles of his day. Interestingly, Meiri's seemingly bizarre explanation of the Talmud's נוצרים as being related to Nebuchadnezzar parallels R. Yehiel's explanation of the prayer against זדון מלכות as referring to the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar.

– [wfb](#), Jul 15, 2021 at 18:12

On Meiri's knowledge of R. Yehiel's disputation, see Jacob Katz, Exclusiveness and Tolerance (Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 122. For R. Yehiel's explanation of Talmudic discriminatory law cited, see Katz, 112.

– [wfb](#), Jul 15, 2021 at 18:13

Related: "[Is Christianity Avodah Zara](#)" (especially [Double AA's answer there](#)).

– [Tamir Evan](#), Jul 16, 2021 at 7:05

@DoubleAA I bought and read this essay by Prof. Zalcman. It is very interesting as it reports very rare and therefore precious news, even if it did not distract me from the idea that the "notzrim" of these Talmudic passages are the Christians and not the Mandaean

– [Amos74](#), Jul 18, 2021 at 12:06

@DoubleAA Among other things, Prof. Zalcman himself seems to me rather cautious, expressing himself in terms of the possibility that these Notzrim are the Mandaean, without firmly embracing this thesis.

– [Amos74](#), Jul 18, 2021 at 17:26

Thread: What does the talmud/rabbinic writing have to say about Yeshu ha-Notzri (Jesus)?

<https://judaism.stackexchange.com/questions/47327/what-does-the-talmud-rabbinic-writing-have-to-say-about-yeshu-ha-notzri-jesus>

I have read that the 19th century Reform scholar Abraham Geiger thought that Balaam was code for Jesus.

**Thread: What Talmudic manuscripts (if any) have Jesus instead of Balaam? /
What Does 'MS.M. Jesus' mean?**

<https://judaism.stackexchange.com/questions/68429/what-talmudic-manuscripts-if-any-have-jesus-instead-of-balaam-what-does-ms?rq=1>

You're right, MS stands for manuscript, and the final M stands for Munich. It is the oldest complete manuscript of the Talmud available, which means many consider it to be the most accurate. However as Shalom pointed out, Soncino is NOT citing Jesus as being Balaam, it is citing that Jesus is in place of "sinners of Israel." I think you are seeing Balaam in close proximity to a section of censored Talmud and putting Jesus in the wrong spot. The reason that Geiger and scholars after him think Balaam is a code word for Jesus is the following:

Since the time of Geiger (JZWL, 6 (1868), 31–37) various scholars have tried to view the name Balaam, occurring in many aggadot, as a pseudonym for Jesus. They find their proof in the passage: "A certain sectarian said to Hanina 'Have you heard how old Balaam was?' He replied 'It is not actually stated, but since it is written "Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days" [Ps. 55:24] he must have been 33 or 34'. He rejoined 'You have spoken correctly; I personally have seen Balaam's Chronicle, in which it is stated, "Balaam the lame was 33 years of age when Phinehas the robber killed him" [Sanh. 106b].'" On the basis that Jesus lived about 33 years and is called a sectarian, it was maintained that Balaam's Chronicle is none other than the Gospels and "Phinehas the robber" Pontius Pilate. However, it is impossible to imagine that a Christian would ask a Jew how old Jesus was, and call the Gospel Balaam's Chronicle or that Pontius Pilate, who is not mentioned even once in the whole of rabbinic literature, should be referred to as Phinehas the robber.

Geiger's and other more recent scholarly arguments citing Balaam as Jesus doesn't really have any concrete evidence, their argument is based on drawing connections based on similarities and oddities. However, when we are dealing with the reality of nearly all surviving texts being censored, it's impossible to find out where the censorship begins and ends. Even our oldest "uncensored" books could have already been censored, with more recent manuscripts being even further censored!

Unfortunately we don't have a "dead sea scrolls" of Talmuds. So while Geiger's argument isn't definitive, those who oppose him don't have a concrete answer either because sometimes we have a clear reference to Jesus that is often edited out of most Talmuds. Such as in Sanhedrin 43, giving fuel to Geiger's argument:

'On the Eve of Passover they hung Jesus of Nazareth for sorcery and leading Israel astray.' This paper argues that other words were added to this tradition in order to overcome three difficulties: a trial date during a festival; the unbiblical method of execution; and the charge of 'sorcery'.

The name Jesus the Nazarene is clearly mentioned. Sometimes when people talk about "Christian censors" what they really mean is that things were censored for fear of Christian violence toward Jews. So it could be possible that Jews themselves censored their own documents to prevent programs or other riots of violence. And when these things happen, it's hard to know where the censorship began and where it ended.

If you want to know how prevalent Jesus shows up in this particular section of Talmud by cross referencing other Talmudic manuscripts, check out this website, which allows you to search by sections and compare manuscripts, I suggest you look up the section of Gittin you're curious about:

<http://jnul.huji.ac.il/dl/talmud/bavly/selectbavly.asp>

Here is a photo of Gittin 57 in question in the Munich Manuscript. You can clearly see the name of Jesus if you look three lines above the large word אתרנגול

It states that Jesus was raised from the dead through incantations: אסקוי' לישו בְּבָנָגִיא'. In the standard text this has been altered to read לפושעי ישראַל, instead of Jesus.

Sorry that the quality isn't the greatest. If you want to get a more readable version you can directly view the Munich manuscript here. Unfortunately it's not broken off into daf numbers.

When it comes to these arguments there will never be a definitive answer. Because it comes down to things like this: If I am an "Orthodox Jew" and have a belief that only x manuscript of the Talmud Bavli is the correct one, then i have no concern if there are other manuscripts out there that explicitly mention the name of Jesus.

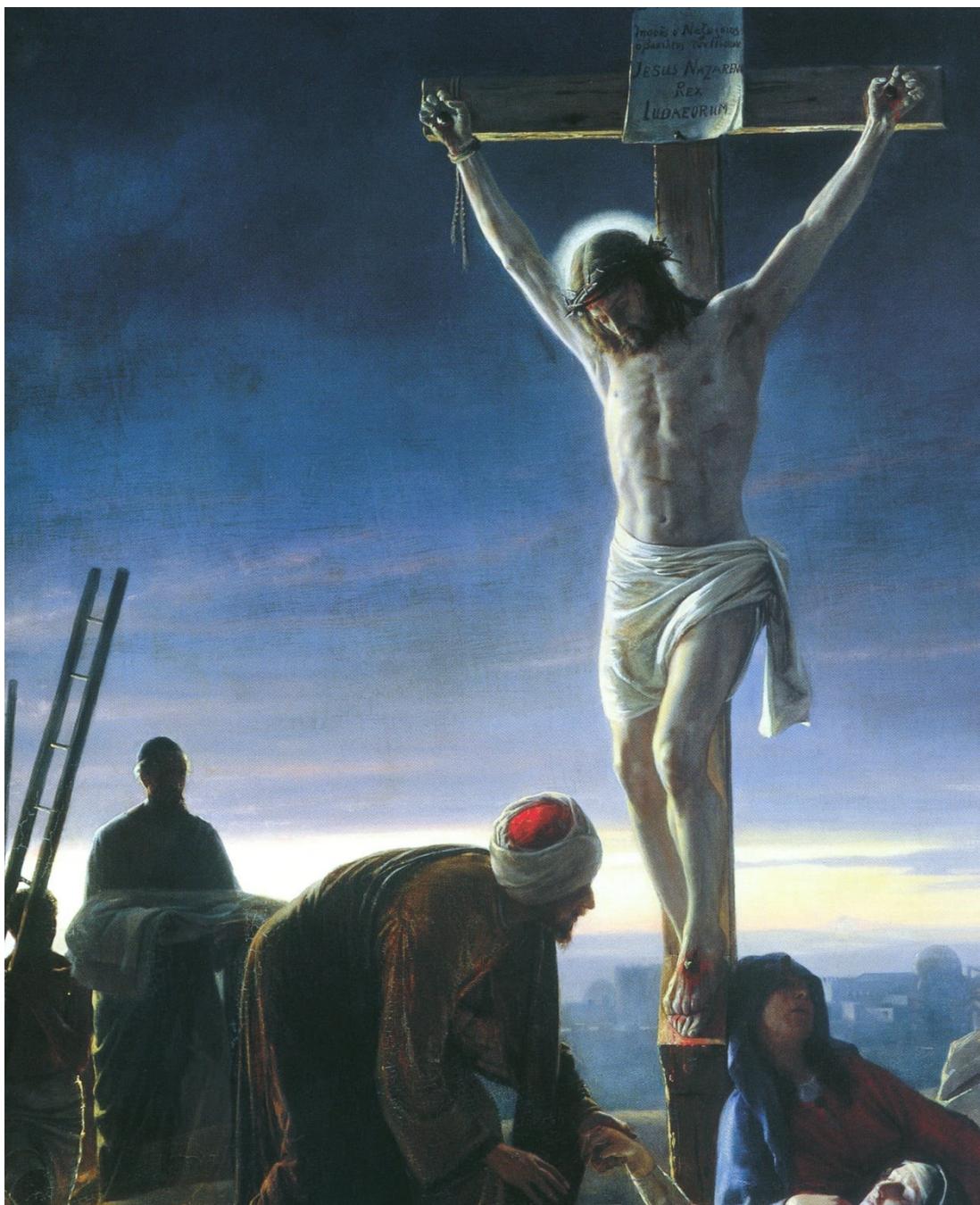
Another issue comes down to this: We have hundreds, sometimes thousands of manuscripts, and most of them vary, so how do you find out which is the correct one? You could make the argument that when most of them agree on something, then the minority of manuscripts that differ are the variant. But when the question comes to the potentiality that something was censored, how do you know which is the actual original, the one that has the rare reading, or the ones that all conform to something? What if the oldest manuscript we have (the Munich) has Jesus in several places, whereas every newer manuscript has the name Jesus missing? What do you do when most of the Ashkenazi manuscripts say x, and the Sepharadi or Yemenite ones say y?

I'm interested if anybody before Geiger claimed that Balaam was Jesus. How far back the claim goes and who made it.

Undoubtedly when you have such similarities in the texts about Jesus and Balaam there will be lots of people who make this argument. But more than likely most people who made this claim in older times probably weren't Jews, as Jews try to talk as little about Jesus as possible. This can lead Rabbis to ignore sections of any manuscripts that could be too problematic.

For more information regarding Jesus in the Munich Manuscript I recommend that you read this article: Jesus of Nazareth's Trial in the Uncensored Talmud. Written by a prominent scholar in Rabbinic Works.

End of search results listing



Plato's famous crucified Just Man – the real inspiration underlying the Christian crucifixion narrative (as we now have it), or a supernatural Socratic–Platonic prophesy predicting the fate of Jesus, the Righteous Notzri/Nazarene? (Resurrection Day)

Below is the famous passage, in Allan Bloom's literal translation (digitized by the undersigned), as well as the fascinating context:

Excerpts from Book II of Plato's “*Republic*”/*Politeia*

[358e]

[Glaukon:] “Now listen to what I said I was going to tell first—what justice is and where it came from.

They say that doing injustice is naturally good, and suffering injustice bad, but that the bad in suffering injustice far exceeds the good in doing it; so that, when they do injustice to one another and suffer it and taste of both, it seems profitable – to those who are not able to escape the one and choose the other – to set down a compact among themselves neither to do injustice nor to suffer it.

[359a]

And from there they began to set down their own laws and compacts and to name what the law commands lawful and just.

And this, then, is the genesis and being of justice; it is a mean between what is best – doing injustice without paying the penalty – and what is worst – suffering injustice without being able to avenge oneself.

The just is in the middle between these two, cared for not because it is good but because it is honored due to a want of vigor in doing injustice.

The man who is able to do it and is truly a man would never set down a compact with anyone not to do injustice and not to suffer it. He'd be mad.

[This is exactly what happened in France in late 1700s, in the wake of the first Revolution there, and, later, over the course of the initial decades of the 20th century, in one Communist country after another – the Soviet Union, Hungary, Spain, etc. –

the Rule of Law was, in effect, abolished, and replaced with Tyranny and a Reign of Terror, exercised by a ruthless minority consisting of criminals and clinical psychopaths who, not believing in an Afterlife of Just Rewards and Punishments, thought they could do whatever they wanted, including the carrying out of the most heinous acts of violence, torture, sadism and desecration, without ever having to pay the just penalty. – E.S.]

[359b]

Now the nature of justice is this and of this sort, and it naturally grows out of these sorts of things.

So the argument goes.

[Here comes the Legend of the Ring of Gyges, one of the foremost sources of inspiration underlying John Ronald Reuel Tolkien's Lord of the Rings-narrative, which is much more "Platonic" than most people realize.

Also note that the Jesus of the gospel narratives is sometimes portrayed as suddenly vanishing from sight when having gotten himself into a dangerous situation and being threatened with violence. Contrary to the Gyges of legend, however, neither the Jesus of the gospels or the "Yeshu ha-Notzri" of the uncensored Talmud ever abuses his miraculous or theurgical powers to injure others – although the Talmud does accuse him of non-violent "sorcery", and of somehow "leading Israel astray".]

"That even those who practice it do so unwillingly, from an incapacity to do injustice, we would best perceive if we should in thought do something like this:

give each, the just man and the unjust, license to do whatever he wants, while we follow and watch where his desire will lead each.

[359c]

We would catch the just man red-handed going the same way as the unjust man out of a desire to get the better; this is what any nature naturally pursues as good, while it is law which by force perverts it to honor equality.

The license of which I speak would best be realized if they should come into possession of the sort of power that it is said the ancestor of Gyges, the Lydian, once got.

They say he was a shepherd toiling in the service of the man who was then ruling Lydia.

[359c]

There came to pass a great thunderstorm and an earthquake; the earth cracked and a chasm opened at the place where he was pasturing. He saw it, wondered at it, and went down. He saw, along with other quite wonderful things about which they tell tales, a hollow bronze horse. It had windows; peeping in, he saw there was a corpse inside that looked larger than human size. It had nothing on except a gold ring on its hand; he slipped it off and went out.

[359e]

When there was the usual gathering of the shepherds to make the monthly report to the king about the flocks, he too came, wearing the ring. Now, while he was sitting with the others, he chanced to turn the collet of the ring to himself, toward the inside of his hand; when he did this, he became invisible to those sitting by him, and they discussed him as though he were away.

[360a]

He wondered at this, and, fingering the ring again, he twisted the collet toward the outside; when he had twisted it, he became visible. Thinking this over, he tested whether the ring had this power, and that was exactly his result: when he turned the

collet inward, he became invisible, when outward, visible. Aware of this, he immediately contrived to be one of the messengers to the king.

When he arrived, he committed adultery with the king's wife and, along with her, set upon the king and killed him. And so he took over the rule.

Now if there were two such rings, and the just man would put one on, and the unjust man the other, no one, as it would seem, would be so adamant as to stick by justice and bring himself to keep away from what belongs to others and not lay hold of it, although he had license to take what he wanted from the market without fear, and to go into houses and have intercourse with whomever he wanted, and to slay or release from bonds whomever he wanted, and to do other things as an equal to a god among humans [“god” here being a reference to the lesser gods of popular imagination, originally derived from the woefully misinterpreted and misunderstood allegorical theogonies and mythologies once created by ancients like Orpheus in order to record and encode and preserve the sophisticated knowledge of topics like the processes of Nature and of the Cosmos, and astronomical and astrological cycles, in a symbolical form. – E.S.].

And in so doing, one would act no differently from the other, but both would go the same way.

And yet, someone could say that this is a great proof that no one is willingly just but only when compelled to be so.

Men do not take it to be a good for them in private, since wherever each supposes he can do injustice, he does it.

Indeed, all men suppose injustice is far more to their private profit than justice.

[360d]

And what they suppose is true, as the man who makes this kind of an argument will say, since if a man were to get hold of such license and were never willing to do any

injustice and didn't lay his hands on what belongs to others, he would seem most wretched to those who were aware of it, and most foolish too, although they would praise him to each others' faces, deceiving each other for fear of suffering injustice.

So much for that.

As to the judgment itself about the life of these two of whom we are speaking, we'll be able to make it correctly if we set the most just man and the most unjust in opposition; if we do not, we won't be able to do so.

What, then, is this opposition?

It is as follows: we shall take away nothing from the injustice of the unjust man nor from the justice of the just man, but we shall take each as perfect in his own pursuit.

So, first, let the unjust man act like the clever craftsmen. [“Clever craftsmen” could be an allusion the demiurgical powers in charge of the physical-material-manifestational universe; the Realm of Becoming; of Generation or Genesis.]

[361a]

An outstanding pilot or doctor is aware of the difference between what is impossible in his art and what is possible, and he attempts the one, and lets the other go; and if, after all, he should still trip up in any way, he is competent to set himself aright.

Similarly, let the unjust man also attempt unjust deeds correctly, and get away with them, if he is going to be extremely unjust. The man who is caught must be considered a poor chap.

For the extreme of injustice is to seem to be just when one is not.

[This is precisely how “the Scribes and Pharisees” of the canonical Christians gospels are portrayed by both the narrators and by the Jesus of those gospels himself – they are always attempting to seem perfectly just, whereas the reality is that they are

extremely unjust. The New Testament portrayals of these ancient Israelite intellectuals and leaders are perhaps caricatures, however. – E.S.]

So the perfectly unjust man must be given the most perfect injustice, and nothing must be taken away; he must be allowed to do the greatest injustices while having provided himself with the greatest reputation for justice.

And if, after all, he should trip up in anything, he has the power to set himself aright; if any of his unjust deeds should come to light, he is capable both of speaking persuasively and of using force, to the extent that force is needed, since he is courageous and strong and since he has provided for friends and money.

[Here the intelligent reader should once again be reminded of the deplorable and soul-crushing state of affairs usually prevailing in many of the Communist states of the 20th century, where the truth was continuously suppressed, with an evil sophistication most people here in the West cannot even begin to imagine, where the act of lying was turned into a perverse form of art, and a terrible weapon, and where all dissent which did not benefit the tyrants in charge in some way was either violently and ruthlessly crushed or subverted and annihilated by way of clever infiltration. Yakov Sverdlov, one of Lenin's foremost associates, and guilty of ordering the execution of the entire Russian royal family, including all the children, and of not even granting them dignified burials, viewed and portrayed himself as a hero, and the town where the murders were perpetrated was later renamed Sverdlovsk, "in honor of" the leader of the murderers. In the fakery that was official Soviet history, moreover, the whole Romanov Dynasty was portrayed as a dynasty of barbarians and oppressors, when the truth of the matter was that they had first liberated both Russia and what is now Ukraine from the vestiges of the old tyranny of the Mongols and the barbaric slave trade of the Tartars of Crimea, that they had then liberated much of Eastern Europe and the Caucasus from the tyranny of the Islamic Ottoman Empire, and, finally, that they had liberated the serfs of their own society and made the Russia of the late 1800s and early 1900s one of the most successful and sophisticated Christian empires on the globe. – E.S.]

[361b]

Now, let us set him down as such, and put beside him in the argument the just man in his turn, a man simple and noble, who, according to Aeschylus, does not wish to seem, but rather to be, good.

The seeming must be taken away. For if he should seem just, there would be honors and gifts for him for seeming to be such. Then it wouldn't be plain whether he is such for the sake of the just or for the sake of the gifts and honors.

So he must be stripped of everything except justice, and his situation must be made the opposite of the first man's. Doing no injustice, let him have the greatest reputation for injustice, so that his justice may be put to the test to see if it is softened by bad reputation and its consequences.

Let him go unchanged till death, seeming throughout life to be unjust although he is just, so that when each has come to the extreme – the one of justice, the other of injustice – they can be judged as to which of the two is happier.

[Socrates:] “My, my,” I said, “my dear Glaucon, how vigorously you polish up each of the two men – just like a statue – for their judgment.”

“As much as I can,” he said. “With two such men it’s no longer hard, I suppose, to complete the speech by a description of the kind of life that awaits each.

[361e]

It must be told, then. And if it’s somewhat rustically told, don’t suppose that it is I who speak, Socrates, but rather those who praise injustice ahead of justice.

They'll say that the just man who has such a disposition will be whipped; he'll be racked; he'll be bound; he'll have both his eyes burned out;

[362a]

and, at the end, when he has undergone every sort of evil, he'll be crucified [ἀνασχινδυλευθήσεται] and know that one shouldn't wish to be, but to seem to be, just.

[The ancient Greek term here translated by Allan Bloom as “will be crucified” is “ἀνασχινδυλευθήσεται”, a future form of the verb ἀνασκολοπίζω; “I impale” or “I fix on a pole/stake”. See <https://lsj.gr/wiki/%E1%BC%80%CE%BD%CE%B1%CF%83%CE%BA%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%BF%CF%80%CE%AF%CE%B6%CF%89>]

After all, Aeschylus’ saying applies far more correctly to the unjust man. For really, they will say, it is the unjust man, because he pursues a thing dependent on truth and does not live in the light of opinion, who does not wish to seem unjust but to be unjust,

‘Reaping a deep furrow in his mind
From which trusty plans bear fruit.’

First, he rules in the city because he seems to be just. Then he takes in marriage from whatever station he wants and gives in marriage to whomever he wants; he contracts and has partnerships with whomever he wants, and, besides benefiting himself in all this, he gains because he has no qualms about doing injustice.

So then, when he enters contests, both private and public, he wins and gets the better of his enemies. In getting the better, he is wealthy and does good to friends and harm to enemies.

To the gods he makes sacrifices and sets up votive offerings, adequate and magnificent, and cares for the gods and those human beings he wants to care for far better than the just man.

[Compare this to the public displays of charity and worship and the deplorable hypocrisy so vehemently criticized by Jesus in Matthew, chapter 6:

“Take care that you do not your [acts of] righteousness in front of others in order to be seen by them: otherwise you have no reward with your Father (Pater) who is in the Heavens.

When therefore you do acts of compassion, do not sound not a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues (assemblies) and in the streets, that they may be glorified by the people.

Verily I say unto you, they receive their [proper, bitter] wages.

But when you do acts of compassion, let not your left hand know what your right hand is doing, and your compassion may remain secret – and your Father (Pater), the One seeing in secret (in the dark), will reward you.

And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues (assemblies) and on the corners of the streets, so that they may be seen by the people.

Verily I say unto you, they receive their [proper, bitter] wages.

You, however, when you pray, enter into your secret (inner) chamber (your treasury), and, having shut your door, pray to your Father (Pater), the One (residing) in (the) secret, and your Father, the One seeing in secret (in the dark), will reward you.”

(If I were an ordinary Christian, I would ask myself: Is this and other descriptions of Jesus’ “the Father in the Heavens” compatible with the YHWH of the Old Testament? Moreover, do these new commandments sound like an endorsement of Pharisaical or Rabbinical Judaism? Finally, have any of the mainstream Christian churches ever followed these commandments? Do not the common liturgies and masses encourage Christians to precisely that which Jesus is discouraging his followers from doing? Is it not perfectly clear, if these sayings are authentic, that Jesus advocated for an individual, inner, spiritual type of religio-philosophical system, as opposed to the communal, outer, worldly type?)]

So, in all likelihood, it is also more appropriate for him to be dearer to the gods than is the just man. Thus, they say, Socrates, with gods and with humans, a better life is provided for the unjust man than for the just man.”

When Glaucon had said this, I had it in mind to say something to it, but his brother Adeimantus said in his turn, “You surely don’t believe, Socrates, that the argument has been adequately stated?”

“Why not?” I said.

“What most needed to be said has not been said,” he said. “Then,” I said, “as the saying goes, ‘let a man stand by his brother.’ So, you too, if he leaves out anything, come to his defense. And yet, what he said was already enough to bring me to my knees and make it impossible to help out justice.”

And he said, “Nonsense. But still hear this too. We must also go through the arguments opposed to those of which he spoke, those that praise justice and blame injustice, so that what Glaucon in my opinion wants will be clearer.

No doubt, fathers say to their sons and exhort them, as do all those who have care of anyone, that one must be just. However, they don’t praise justice by itself but the good reputations that come from it;

they exhort their charges to be just so that, as a result of the opinion, ruling offices and marriages will come to the one who seems to be just, and all the other things that Glaucon a moment ago attributed to the just man as a result of his having a good reputation. And these men tell even more of the things resulting from the opinions. For by throwing in good reputation with the gods, they can tell of an inexhaustible store of goods that they say gods give to the holy. And in this way they join both the noble Hesiod and Homer.

(...)

“My dear Socrates,” he said, “with all these things being said – of this sort and in this quantity – about virtue and vice and how human beings and gods honor them, what do we suppose they do to the souls of the young men who hear them?

I mean those who have good natures and have the capacity, as it were, to fly to all the things that are said and gather from them what sort of man one should be and what way one must follow to go through life best. **In all likelihood he would say to himself, after Pindar, will I ‘with justice or with crooked deceits scale the higher wall’ where I can fortify myself all around and live out my life?**

For the things said indicate that there is no advantage in my being just, if I don’t also seem to be, while the labors and penalties involved are evident. But if I’m unjust, but have provided myself with a reputation for justice, a divine life is promised. Therefore, since as the wise make plain to me, ‘the seeming overpowers even the truth’, and is the master of happiness, one must surely turn wholly to it.

As facade and exterior I must draw a shadow painting of virtue all around me, while behind it I must trail the wily and subtle fox of the most wise Archilochus.

‘But,’ says someone, ‘it’s not always easy to do bad and get away with it unnoticed.’

‘Nothing great is easy,’ we’ll say. ‘But at all events, if we are going to be happy we must go where the tracks of the arguments lead.

For, as to getting away with it, we’ll organize secret societies and clubs; and there are teachers of persuasion who offer the wisdom of the public assembly and the court.

On this basis, in some things we’ll persuade and in others use force; thus we’ll get the better and not pay the penalty.’

‘But it surely isn’t possible to get away from the gods or overpower them.’ ‘But, if there are no gods, or if they have no care for human things, why should we care at all about getting away? And if there are gods and they care, we know of them or have

heard of them from nowhere else than the laws, and the poets who have given genealogies; and these are the very sources of our being told that they are such as to be persuaded and perverted by sacrifices, soothing vows, and votive offerings.

Either both things must be believed or neither. If they are to be believed, injustice must be done and sacrifice offered from the unjust acquisitions.

For if we are just, we won't be punished by the gods. That is all. And we'll refuse the gains of injustice.

But if we are unjust, we shall gain and get off unpunished as well, by persuading the gods with prayers when we transgress and make mistakes.'

'But in Hades we'll pay the penalty for our injustices here, either we ourselves or our children's children.' 'But, my dear,' will say the man who calculates, 'the initiations and the delivering gods have great power, as say the greatest cities and those children of gods who have become poets and spokesmen of the gods and reveal that this is the case.'

"Then, by what further argument could we choose justice before the greatest injustice? For, if we possess it with a counterfeited seemly exterior, we'll fare as we are minded with gods and human beings both while we are living and when we are dead, so goes the speech of both the many and the eminent.

After all that has been said, by what device, Socrates, will a man who has some power – of soul, money, body or family – be made willing to honor justice and not laugh when he hears it praised?

(...)

I listened, and although I had always been full of wonder at the nature of Glaucon and Adeimantus, at this time I was particularly delighted and said, "That wasn't a bad beginning, you children of that man, that Glaucon's lover made to his poem about

your distinguishing yourselves in the battle at Megara: Sons of Ariston, divine offspring of a famous man.

That, my friends, in my opinion is good. For something quite divine must certainly have happened to you, if you are remaining unpersuaded that injustice is better than justice when you are able to speak that way on its behalf.

Now you truly don't seem to me to be being persuaded. I infer it from the rest of your character, since, on the basis of the arguments themselves, I would distrust you. And the more I trust you, the more I'm at a loss as to what I should do.

On the one hand, I can't help out. For in my opinion I'm not capable of it; my proof is that when I thought I showed in what I said to Thrasymachus that justice is better than injustice, you didn't accept it from me. On the other hand, I can't not help out. For I'm afraid it might be impious to be here when justice is being spoken badly of and give up and not bring help while I am still breathing and able to make a sound.

So the best thing is to succour her as I am able."

Glaucon and the others begged me in every way to help out and not to give up the argument, but rather to seek out what each is and the truth about the benefit of both. So I spoke my opinion.

"It looks to me as though the investigation we are undertaking is no ordinary thing, but one for a man who sees sharply. Since we're not clever men," I said, "in my opinion we should make this kind of investigation of it:

if someone had, for example, ordered men who don't see very sharply to read little letters from afar and then someone had the thought that the same letters are somewhere else also, but bigger and in a bigger place, I suppose it would look like a godsend to be able to consider the littler ones after having read these first, if, of course, they do happen to be the same."

“Most certainly,” said Adeimantus. “But, Socrates, what do you notice in the investigation of the just that’s like this?”

“I’ll tell you,” I said. “There is, we say, justice of one man; and there is, surely, justice of a whole city too?”

“Certainly,” he said.

“Is a city bigger than one man?”

“Yes, it is bigger;” he said.

“So then, perhaps there would be more justice in the bigger and it would be easier to observe closely. If you want, first we’ll investigate what justice is like in the cities.

[369a]

Then, we’ll also go on to consider it in individuals, considering the likeness of the bigger in the idea of the littler?”

“What you say seems fine to me,” he said.

“If we should watch a city coming into being in speech,” I said, “would we also see its justice coming into being, and its injustice?”

“Probably,” he said.

“When this has been done, can we hope to see what we’re looking for more easily?”

“Far more easily.”

“Is it resolved that we must try to carry this out? I suppose it’s no small job, so consider it.”

“It’s been considered,” said Adeimantus. “Don’t do anything else.”

End of quote from Allan Bloom’s literal translation of Plato’s *Politeia*

Comments on this post made at Academia.edu:

VERY MUCH LIKE: “... men who don’t see very sharply to read little letters from afar and then someone had the thought that the same letters are somewhere else also, but bigger and in a bigger place, I suppose it would look like a godsend to be able to consider the littler ones after having read these first, if, of course, they do happen to be the same.”

The third instalment of your Easter trilogy is thought-provoking, like the first two. There are several aspects that i want to consider more thoroughly and discuss some:

1. Plato’s story as proto-type for the New Testament “crucifix-ation” narrative. There is plausibility for this. Actually, I favor the notion of much of the gospels as Midrash literature (c.f. Peter van’t Riet) ala a “find-and-replace” edit to change names.

Also, Paul Hubbard did a “Jonas Genre”, wherein he compares the Jesus suicide Jerusalem mission with the story of an unwitting and reticent Jonas called to be a prophet to Nineveh.

Good stories are like that: a popular, well-known theme, a few name changes for the characters, a different time and place, and a slight twist in the plot (Osiris, Mithras, Mohammad, etc.).

2. Compare your selection of Glaucon and Socrates, considering justice, with the Book of Job.
3. The “pole” in Plato’s story may be likened to the spine in Hindu yoga; that is all of this unique organism [or ‘city’] incarnate, embodied, and organized around it as if

hanging from the spine. (...)

4. Combining these with the elements of the first two essays can suggest various identities for “Jesus Christ”, including: a path or WAY [method for practice], a “Socrates”-like person of character, you or anybody (yup we all get crucified in a run amok society where “NO good deed will go unpunished”.

P.S.: I only sped-read the first version of this post, and was considering how to respond to some of Adrian’s ideas. I often “like” the spirit in which something is said even when I do not agree with the idea.

Response to Wurx Beaufort:

Thank you for both your generous dose of positivity and your ideas. Being burdened with the sort of sensitive and empathetic personality type which instantly absorbs the energy, the feelings and the states of mind of other people, as well as the ambiences of whatever place or environment I find myself in, as if I were a poor sponge, I need to surround myself both here and in real life with individuals who have a positive and constructive and respectful attitude, and you seem to be one such individual, although I do not really know much about who you are.

My inboxes both here and elsewhere are chock-full of all kinds of messages from all kinds of people, by the way, and it is simply not possible for me to respond properly to all of them, not only because doing so would take up the better part of several days each week, but because I have long been struggling with periodically strained and hyper-sensitive and painful eyes. One of my consolations is that the Platonic philosopher Plotinus was afflicted in much the same way. Ha-ha.

As for the question of whether or not the (divine) Platonic “corpus” is one of the actual (divine) inspirations underlying the New Testament texts, as we now have them, I think it is possible that the authors and editors modelled their characters and narratives on those found in Plato, but since it is a fact that both Judea and Galilee had been heavily influenced by Greek/Hellenic culture and philosophy and art for

centuries by the time Jesus Christ allegedly appeared on the scene, to the point where many ordinary “Israelites” did not even speak “Hebrew”, but preferred Greek, and “Hebrew” was on the verge of becoming a “dead” language, in much the same way that Latin is a “dead” language now, I think it also perfectly possible that both the authors and editors of the early Christian texts and “the Man Himself” were very heavily influenced in their thinking by Platonism, or/and that they had been initiated into the various “pagan” Mysteries.

Moreover, being of the firm conviction that there are *objectively real* supernatural or paranormal phenomena, and that prophesy, in the sense of a mental glimpsing or a behavioral prefiguring of the future, is a real possibility, I think it is a real option that Socrates and/or Plato actually embedded hints of what was to come in their speeches and their work, whether consciously or unconsciously.

But it must be admitted that there is so much Platonism even in early Christianity, or so much (of what would later be styled) “Christianity” in Platonism – and I have not even detailed more than perhaps twenty percent of the most striking parallels, which are found not only in the gospels themselves, but in Paul (who some believe is actually Apollonius of Tyana) – that the case of the appearance of the collection of books now called the New Testament looks more than a little suspicious.

The scholar Russell Gmirkin is of the opinion that the influence of Plato’s Platonism extends even to the Israelite Tanakh, by the way, and that the very creation of the Tanakh or “Old Testament”, as it now exists, was at least partly inspired by and motivated by Plato’s dialogues, such as his *Laws*. Some go even further, and claim that the Tanakh, in the form we now have it, was written almost from “scratch” in the metropolis of Alexandria, only a few centuries prior to the Christian era.

– E.S.

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Illustrations (Wikimedia Commons):

“Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane” (1890), by Johann Michael Ferdinand Heinrich Hofmann (1824–1911)

“The Crucifixion”, by Carl Heinrich Bloch (1834–1890)

“The Way to Emmaus” (1877), by Robert Zünd (1827–1909)

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